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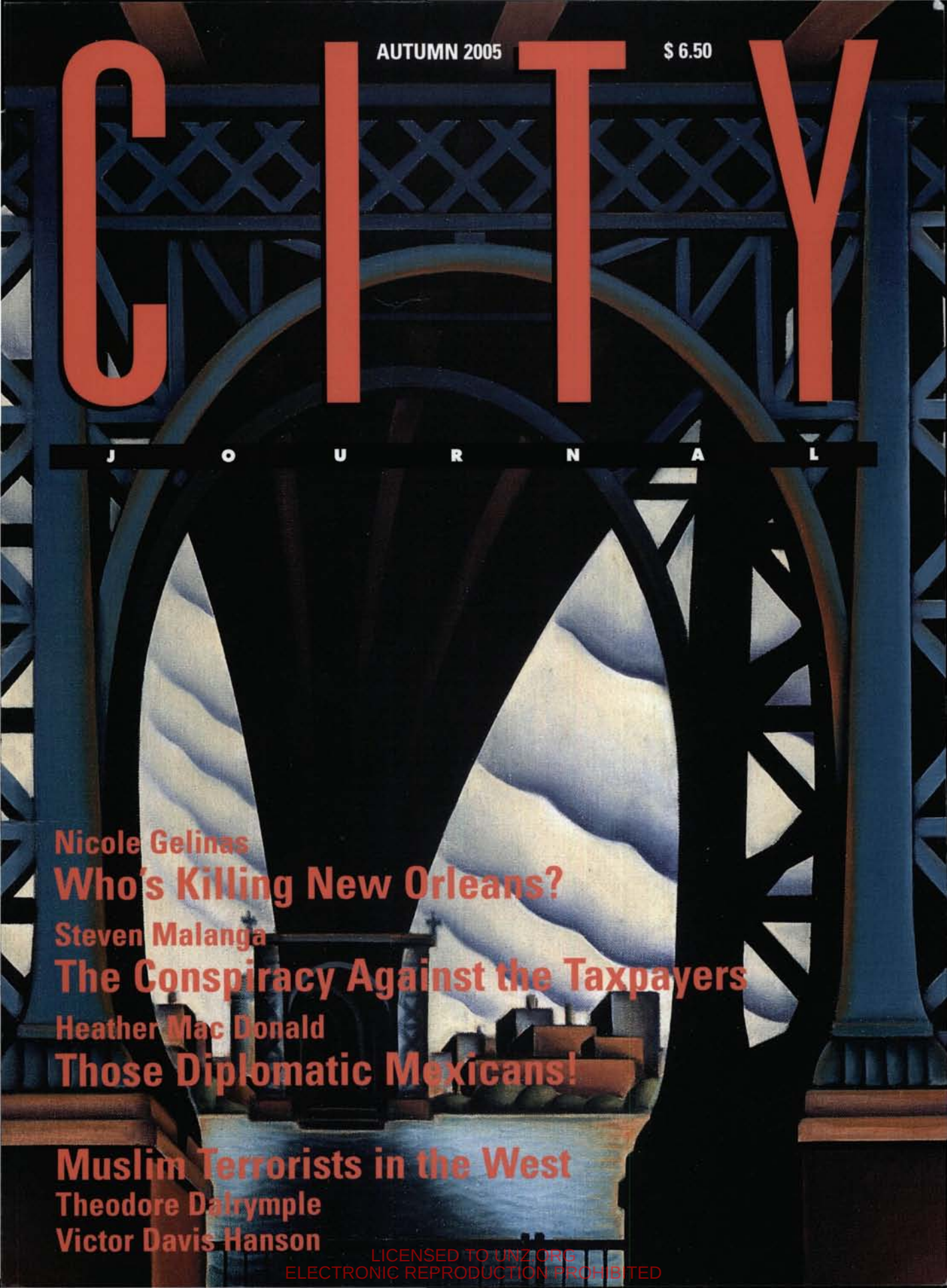

Nicole Gelinas
Who's Killing New Orleans?

Steven Malanga
The Conspiracy Against the Taxpayers

Heather Mac Donald
Those Diplomatic Mexicans!

Muslim Terrorists in the West
Theodore Dalrymple
Victor Davis Hanson

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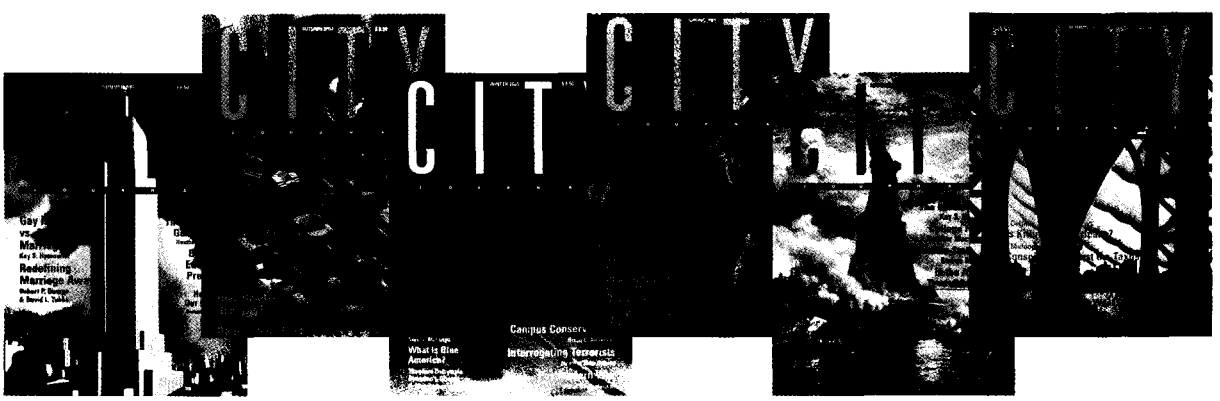

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In Prospect

Contributing Editor Nicole Gelinas, who as a Tulane undergrad fell permanently under the Big Easy's magical spell, was lamenting, in one of our editorial meetings months before Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans's sad decline. It was, she said, a poster child for an unreformed town, stuck in a time warp before policy innovators sparked America's urban renaissance. The once-great port city, we agreed, was well worth an article on How Not to Do It. But we didn't envision a story like the chilling "Who's Killing New Orleans?" on page 14. You might think that, after the flood of ink spilled recently over New Orleans, you have no interest in hearing one more word. But read this article. It is a revelation, brilliantly—and surprisingly—illuminating the deeper meaning of the chaos following August 29.

Of course, the urban-reform movement that bypassed New Orleans has now slowed and in some places sputtered out, after its successes of the late 1990s. Worse, a counterrevolution has gathered momentum. As Steven Malanga documented in the *City Journal* stories collected in his acclaimed book, *The New New Left*, a coalition of public-employee unions, government-funded social-service agencies, and health-care unions whose members live off Medicaid's billions have become the most powerful political force in many U.S. cities and statehouses. It's not true, as Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia famously said, that "There is no Democratic or Republican way of picking up garbage," since the Democratic way has always been to do it with as many unionized employees, and as inefficiently, as possible; but the new tax-eaters' party that has taken control of cities has pushed that principle much further. As Malanga's "The Conspiracy Against the Taxpayers" (page 42) shows, the average (inefficient and possibly unneeded) public-sector employee now not only gets paid better than the average private-sector worker, but also enjoys a lavishly better, and safer, pension, and can start collecting it much sooner. As the bill for all this now comes due, the taxpayers who have to foot it are groaning under the burden—and leaving for more taxpayer-friendly climes.

In "They're Taking Away Your Property for *What*?" (page 54), Nicole Gelinas unmasks another face of the conspiracy against the taxpayers that is the urban counterrevolution. Critics rightly excoriated as unjust the Supreme Court's recent *Kelo* decision, which expanded government's eminent-domain powers. But, Gelinas explains, critics didn't notice that the Court was merely endorsing a long-standing practice by which state and local governments seize private property, without even having to show that it is blighted, in order to further government-led "economic development." From New London to Moscow, such central planning has never worked. What it does do, however, is give government and its politically connected supporters a rich store of assets to divvy up—which, with the addition of a few hundred million dollars of subsidies from the powerless taxpayer, makes for a festive piñata for the political racket, though it leaves the community much poorer than it would be if private investors made their own decisions with their own property, in the traditional American way.

Such developments make one value anew the wisdom of Jefferson's quip: "That government is best that governs least." But once we strip away the legions of overpaid public workers providing services that no one needs, a few key government functions remain—above all, keeping citizens safe from external and internal aggression. In a war against Muslim terror, Victor Davis Hanson argues on page 76, that would mean making sure that fewer Muslims enter the U.S. and keeping tabs on Islamic radicals already here—a task government is irresponsibly loath to undertake. But the consequences of such failure became horribly evident in the London July 7 bombings, whose psychological origins Theodore Dalrymple uncovers in "The Suicide Bombers Among Us" (page 66). The cause of the U.S. government's reluctance to secure our borders is its unwillingness to stem illegal immigration from Mexico—which, as Heather Mac Donald explains in her blood-pressure-raising "Mexico's Undiplomatic Diplomats" (page 28), the Mexican government is all too willing to exploit. It's another weakness in our homeland security, on top of the one Katrina exposed.

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oundings

Reformer Bloomberg?

The businessman mayor at last shows some spine in resisting the unions.

The conventional wisdom says that Mayor Michael Bloomberg has moved left in seeking reelection this year. After all, as the *New York Times* notes, the mayor has opposed President Bush and the national GOP on several high-profile issues, including Chief Justice John Roberts's nomination and the president's suspension of prevailing-wage laws in rebuilding New Orleans.

But those who believe the conventional line should pay more attention to what Bloomberg has done lately than to what he says. On New York policy matters, Bloomberg has been acting more like the reform-minded mayor that voters thought they were getting in 2001.

The businessman mayor, spending his own money, won the 2001 mayoral race without much help from public-employee unions and other special interests. But instead of using his status as political outsider to govern as a reformer, Bloomberg struck a conciliatory tone with his opponents all through his go-along, get-along first term.

Bloomberg's appeasement of the special interests hasn't won him concessions from key unions or helped him solve the city's thorny fiscal problems. Maybe that's why he has sounded less conciliatory of late. These days, he's demanding that any pay raises for city workers go hand-in-hand with productivity increases. In their new contract, for instance, sanitation workers agreed to allow one-person trucks, instead of the current two-man crews, in exchange for a 17 percent pay increase over 51 months—a move that will reduce the department's head count by 200 workers. And Bloomberg got the city's teachers to agree to spend more time in class and to abandon the policy that allowed senior teachers to transfer into schools whether the principal wanted them or not. Though the teachers' contract achieved no major reforms, it's better than the mayor's 2002 performance, when he helped engineer a $275 million raise for the teachers in the midst of the post-9/11 crisis.

Bloomberg also commendably refused to buckle under pressure from Local 1199/SEIU to add 25,000 of its health-care workers, currently working for private agencies, to city payrolls, thus boosting their benefits. The union dangled its political endorsement as a quid pro quo. SEIU locals elsewhere have used the same strategy successfully—with budget-busting results (see "The Conspiracy Against the Taxpayers" on page 42). After striking out with Bloomberg, health-care workers' union leader Dennis Rivera offered the same deal to Democratic mayoral nominee Fernando Ferrer, who apparently jumped at it.

Bloomberg is betting that he can be reelected without the endorsement of the city's two most politically powerful special interests. Winning that way would greatly strengthen his hand to pursue the reforms that New York desperately needs. Rudy Giuliani, early in his tenure, managed to restrain the city budget. But when the late nineties' economic expansion sent revenues cascading from Wall Street into city coffers, creating tempting budget surpluses, Giuliani found it harder to enforce rigid fiscal discipline and roll back cushy union work rules and benefits packages. And even Giuliani wasn't above using record tax collections to reward the unions, easing his own 1997 reelection bid.

Today, New York City's budget seems built as if Wall Street were on a permanent roll. Yet a repeat of the heady 1990s in the financial markets is unlikely anytime soon, and anyway can't be counted on as a regular occurrence. So New York still needs a hefty dose of fiscal reform to end its continual cycle of budget deficits and tax increases. And the work of reforming the schools is far from finished. A mayor not beholden to unions and special interests could be the answer to the city's woes—if he chooses. —*Steven Malanga*

Gay Times

The not-so-gray lady indulges its taste for not-fit-to-print news.

Just wondering—what *exactly* was the news value of the *New York Times*'s recent front-page Metro-section spread: A SEX STOP ON THE WAY HOME? Subtitled JUST OFF A PARK'S PLAYING FIELDS, ANOTHER GAME THRIVES, with an eye-catching cropped photo of the gut (but not the shoulders or head) of a beefy man in shorts and pink socks standing just inside his SUV's

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open door, the story recounted in jaw-dropping detail the pick-up rituals of anonymous homosexual sex in a Queens parking lot. The lot adjoins athletic fields used by both youth and adult teams.

Reporter Corey Kilgannon had obviously done extensive research, which allowed him to regale readers with a clinically precise description of the sex transaction's initial stages:

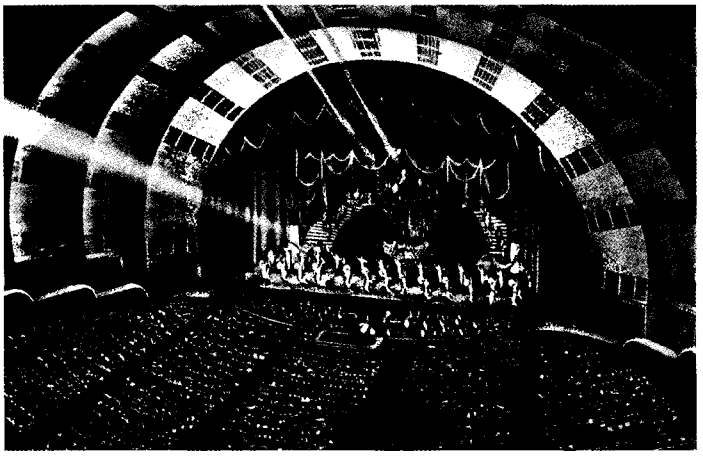
> Each newcomer trolls this thoroughfare [formed between two rows of parked cars facing each other] with all eyes upon him and surveys the other men in cars, who may either perk up and look interested or shut the window and look away. Then with a dramatic swoop, the driver will back his car next to the car of the man he is pursuing.

Kilgannon captured the sexual stratification in the parking lot, between the voluble older gay regulars who "spent the halcyon days of [their] youth" in this "paradise," and "another set of parking lot users [that] is much more reluctant to discuss the cruising activity." These tight-lipped (to reporters' questions) patrons "arrive sometime after 5 PM wearing shirts and ties and driving SUV's and snazzy sports cars. These men tend to be slightly jittery. . . . Generally, they refuse to discuss the parking lot with a reporter."

Heady with his anthropological prowess, Kilgannon describes another stratification: between the parents and children using the ball fields and the gays negotiating their next quickie:

> One recent evening, a half-dozen mothers stood chatting, waiting for their children to finish soccer. A stone's throw away, a group of gay men stood narrating the attempt of a man trolling the lot in a tan sedan to woo the cute man parked in the black SUV. . . . "Woop, there he goes," the narrator said [as the man in the sedan hopped into the SUV]. "You go, girl."

So what was the point of the billboarded story? It's not as if the *Times* were performing a valuable public service to gay men in need of their next anonymous sexual thrill: the lot is already listed on websites publicizing gay cruising spots. Nor is



LAKE COUNTY MUSEUM/CORBIS (4)

this gay "paradise" breaking news: gay boys and men have used it since the 1960s.

Could it be that the *Times* was hoping to shame the vice squad into cleaning up this inappropriate public spectacle? Perish the thought! The story does quote the president of a volunteer park support group, however, who admits reluctantly: "I don't think that 10-year-olds in a parking lot on the way to soccer should see some guy getting oral sex in a car." Give the man a star for reckless bravery!

No, the reason that the *Times* found this story so worthy of the public's attention was certainly the claim made by the older gay regulars that the "vast majority" of cruisers are family men drawn to the parking lot's blandishments. One "longtime parking lot user" tells Kilgannon: "I can't tell you how many guys I've had here who were wearing wedding bands, with baby seats in the car and all kinds of kids' toys in the floor."

This makes the parking lot even more of a "paradise" for the *Times*'s anti-bourgeois staff: it allows them to throw mud for the ten millionth time on the Leave-It-to-Beaver "normalcy" (scare quotes courtesy of *Times*ian worldview) of the white-bread suburbs. One would have thought that the *Times*'s own story this summer about the new "multicultural" suburbs would have finally provided these long-suffering neighborhoods a respite from elite scorn. Alas, it was not to be. Undoubtedly chagrined by the findings in the latest nationwide sex survey that only 2 percent of men self-identify as homosexual, rather than the 10

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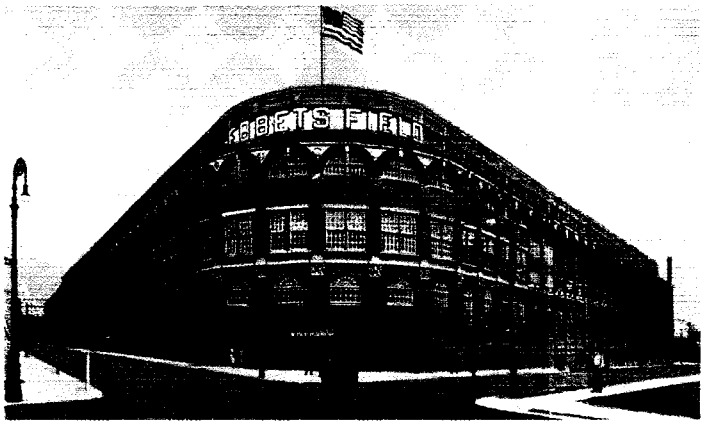
Soundings



percent trumpeted by gay activists, the *Times* has found a rebuttal: self-declaring heterosexual married fathers with a "suburban . . . house, a mortgage, a wife and children" perform gay sex acts with strangers in the privacy of their SUVs.

Given the amount of time Kilgannon obviously spent at the lot researching his piece, you would think that he could have confirmed this crush of family men seeking gay sex in Queens. But he provides no independent evidence for the claim.

The *Times* notes nonchalantly that the gay cruisers ogle the male softball players who change their shirts outside their cars. Neanderthal readers may ask: and what about the boy ballplayers? Are they ogled, too? And if so, tell me again why we should risk gay Boy Scout leaders. But such benighted readers—if one can even imagine such thinking—are not worth the *Times*'s worrying about.

One does wonder, though, who the *Times* thinks its readership is. Presumably, some families share the paper in the morning; some parents may encourage their children to read it to increase their involvement in current affairs. By now, many a parent has undoubtedly learned to dispose discreetly of the twice-weekly Style section, unfailingly devoted to the latest gay trend. But does the *Times* regard its report on a parking lot DOUBLING AS A TRYSTING PLACE FOR GAY MEN (the headline over the jump) as suitable for family consumption? Would the *Times*'s editors happily pass the sex-stop Metro section to their preteen kids, along with the Cheerios? And what about the "donate your vacation papers to schools" program that the *Times* relentlessly promotes—would that Metro section provide valuable reading material for a 9th-grade civics class?

At a time when matters of urgent public moment cry out for investigation—such as how in the world New York's leaders plan to evacuate millions from Manhattan in an emergency—the *Times*'s preference for the insignificant trivia of the gay lifestyle defies comprehension. Either the *Times* is even more clueless about the narrowness of its worldview than previously thought, or it knows how out of the mainstream it is and hopes to shock the leaden bourgeoisie with its sexual obsessions. Either way, its judgment—news and otherwise—is appalling.—*Heather Mac Donald*

Nonprofiteers

Recent Gotham scandals show how nonprofits often fleece taxpayers.

Two New York City nonprofit scandals this summer remind us how easily government's widespread practice of contracting with these private groups for health care and social services—a multibillion-dollar enterprise—can fall prey to political manipulation. Many—even most—of the contracts lack adequate oversight and performance requirements.

Consider, for instance, the case of New York City Councilwoman Margarita Lopez, who steered funds to a Scientology-based program to cleanse 9/11 rescuers of inhaled pollutants. As chair of the council's mental health committee, Lopez praised the program (at first privately funded by celebrity Scientologist Tom Cruise) for treating city workers who aided Ground Zero rescue efforts. She then finagled a city grant of $30,000 for it—an amount that skyrocketed to $630,000 in taxpayer money after Scientologists began pouring contributions into Lopez's unsuccessful campaign for Manhattan borough president.

What alarms many about this case is the appearance of a quid pro quo—Lopez's support seemingly exchanged for the group's political contributions. But the real outrage should be how easily Lopez maneuvered taxpayer funds toward a program that has no scientific basis and that knowledgeable critics dismiss as risibly ineffective. In a City Council hearing, Lopez huffily

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asked, "Who are the stupid people who are criticizing [the program]?" The "stupid people" include many of the nation's top scientists and toxicologists. As far back as 1988, Shreveport, Louisiana, commissioned a study on the program; the independent toxicologist's report branded it "quackery." Earlier this year, California's superintendent of public instruction urged state schools to bar a free Scientology-based drug treatment program (on whose detoxification principles New York's program rests) after a panel of medical doctors and school health–education specialists concluded that it "does not reflect accurate, widely accepted medical and scientific evidence."

Yet Lopez could completely ignore this readily available informed opinion: there's not much in current social-services contracting or grant-making processes (in New York and elsewhere) that prevents a politician or government agency from funding services and treatments based on unproven techniques, or from shoveling money to organizations with weak track records. Thus, job-training centers win funding even when those running them have little experience and the centers place few applicants in jobs, community development groups still get financing even when there's little evidence that they're improving their neighborhoods, and so on. As the Lopez case shows, the key to securing government contracts is often just a matter of finding the right politician to back your program, at taxpayer expense.

The biggest winners are often the folks running the programs, as another summer scandal illustrates. In June, investigators announced that the city was yanking $10 million in contracts from the Bronx's Gloria Wise Boys & Girls Club Inc. for "inappropriate transactions and falsified documents" submitted to city agencies. Later, press leaks revealed that the city had uncovered a fishy Boys & Girls Club loan of some $875,000 of taxpayers' money to the fledgling lefty radio network Air America, whose chairman at the time was also the club's director of development—revelations that forced the departure of the official and several other executives from the club.

The scandal opened the club's books, revealing the kind of government-dependent institution that it had become—and how much it overpaid its officers to provide city-contracted services that volunteer groups once offered at no public expense and that are hardly essential in any case. Begun after the Civil War by volunteers in cities and towns seeking alternative activities for troubled kids who otherwise would roam the streets, Boys Clubs spread rapidly around America; today, some 1,700 groups affiliate with the national organization.

If your image of these clubs is of ardent volunteers working tirelessly to help kids by setting up basketball programs or Little Leagues and operating largely on donations, forget it. The flood of government spending on social services, which began during the 1960s and has swollen inexorably since, has transformed many of these organizations and others like them into public contractors, staffed by social-services "entrepreneurs" who go where the government funding is. Even the national Boys & Girls Clubs organization now gets 60 percent of its money from government.

Gloria Wise, founded in 1977, is a quintessential example of a nonprofit essentially made of government money. It and its nursery-school affiliate had nearly $9 million in revenue in 2002 (the last year for which documents are available). Yet only $529,740 of that money, or 6 percent, came from contributions, while more than 80 percent came from taxpayers. The club used that money to run a variety of programs aimed at kids, from something called "homework empowerment" to pen-pal clubs to "resistance skills programs" designed to help kids resist peer pressure.

Club execs enjoyed rich compensation for running these clearly nonessential programs. The executive director took home about $225,000 yearly in salary (including nearly $80,000 annually for 15 hours a week at the nursery school). The assistant director received roughly $158,000. The salary of the nursery school's director of education would be the envy of even well-paid public school principals: $181,047.

These salaries are way out of line for groups of this size and for programs of this type, according to a *Nonprofit Times* survey. Yet though both the state attorney general and the Internal Revenue Service can investigate a nonprofit for excessive compensation, the kind of cases they take on tend to involve salaries in the millions. Paying hundreds of thousands of dollars to a nonprofit

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executive running after-school programs doesn't qualify as excessive.

Given that New York City alone pays billions in contracting fees to thousands of social-services nonprofits every year, the real scandal is less shady loans than the likelihood of taxpayer money enriching nonprofit entrepreneurs whose compensation far outweighs any services rendered.

—*Steven Malanga*

Peacenik Warmongers

Antiwar demonstrators keep ugly company.

The trouble with peace is peaceniks. In demonstration after demonstration, thousands gather in major cities, waving banners, holding up placards renouncing American "imperialism," clamoring for the pullout of every last U.S. soldier in Iraq. Surrounded by an uncritical press and serenaded by such aging 1960s celebrities as Peter, Paul, and Mary ("This land is your land / This land is my land . . ."), they seem a fading echo of the grand days of righteous social protest when Vietnam and civil rights were the subjects at hand.

But there's nothing grand about these naive and useful idiots, who've been swept up in the slipstream of two long-standing groups that have been organizing the protests. One calls itself United for Peace and Justice; the other is International Answer—an acronym for Act Now to Stop War and End Racism. Both groups posture as lovers of international accord. Both are hostile to democracies. Both are apologists for totalitarian leaders who regard murder as public policy.

Controlling United for Peace and Justice is the Workers World Party, notorious for supporting the Soviet Union's oppression of Hungary and Czechoslovakia and its invasion of Afghanistan. Predictably, it cheered China's lethal suppression of the Tiananmen Square demonstrators. When the WWP isn't herding ovine followers in rallies and marches, its spokesmen issue fulsome praise for Kim Jong-il and Fidel Castro. Currently leading United for Peace and Justice is Leslie Cagan, accurately described by the *New York Sun* as "a longtime unapologetic Communist."

As for Answer, its cofounder is the sordid, invincibly silly Ramsey Clark, 78, ex–U.S. attorney general and defender of a wide range of political criminals, including Manuel Noriega, Slobodan Milosevic, and, currently, Saddam Hussein, whom he plans to represent in court. According to its tenets, there are two major villains in world politics: the U.S. and Israel. Thus, in addition to the customary BUSH = HITLER posters and the "Free Mumia!" chants in defense of a convicted cop killer, Answer people back Palestinian terrorism by wearing keffiyehs, as a tribute to Yasser Arafat, and bearing signs that demand the "Right to Return," code words for the annihilation of the Jewish state. Under the strains of the nostalgic folk songs one hears the repeated chants of "Viva, Viva, Palestina!" and "Viva, Viva, Intifada!" Somehow, these artifacts and noises never seem to make the front page or the TV news.

A great pity. For Americans need to know that these demonstrators have their own definition of peace, and that it does not jibe with Webster's ("noun; the absence of war or other hostilities"). In fact, UPJ and Answer are actually *pro*-war, provided that the conflict results in a blooding of the Great Satans—i.e., Western democracies, with their belief in capitalism, open elections, and freedom of thought and expression.

Some of the signs of the peaceniks read MAKE LOVE NOT WAR. MAKE DEATH NOT LIFE would be more honest.

—*Stefan Kanfer*

NCLB Works

President Bush's maligned No Child Left Behind education act is actually getting results.

A clear sign that the federal No Child Left Behind Act is fulfilling its main purpose in shaking up the ossified public-education establishment is how angry educrats are about it. In August, Connecticut joined the growing chorus of states denouncing NCLB as an "unfunded mandate." Connecticut's attorney general filed a lawsuit arguing that that rich state couldn't possibly afford to provide annual tests in basic reading and math skills to kids in the third through eighth grades, as the law requires.

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This is silly, since testing costs little. Educational firms sell off-the-shelf tests for as little as $2 per student; an elaborate one, written especially for a state's curriculum, might cost the princely sum of $30 per kid. A pencil still costs less than a nickel. Connecticut already tests students in grades four, six, and eight and says that's sufficient. But you only get one chance to educate a child. If a student is falling behind, parents and teachers shouldn't have to wait two years to find out.

It's particularly outrageous that Connecticut resists implementing NCLB, since the achievement gap between minority and nonminority students in the state is among the nation's widest. One of NCLB's key features is to shine a spotlight on America's achievement-gap problem by requiring states to break down each school's results by race, sex, English proficiency, and socioeconomic status. The Bush administration was sending a message to states that it's no longer okay to get their white, middle-class, suburban kids to pass the proficiency threshold while leaving minority, lower-income kids behind. Thanks to NCLB, states can no longer hide behind average scores or say that the typical student in a school or district excels. Each individual student now counts.

Teachers' unions and their legislative allies in Connecticut and other states insist that getting lower-income, minority students on the way to proficiency is impossible without heaps of new federal money. But U.S. public schools hardly lack for funds. State, local, and federal spending on K–12 public education has tripled in inflation-adjusted dollars since 1960. The U.S. now spends $500 billion annually on education, more than Russia's entire gross domestic product—and federal education spending has jumped 40 percent under President Bush. In any case, states can opt out of NCLB simply by forgoing the federal funding tied to the program. NCLB is neither unfunded nor a mandate.

NCLB's accountability provisions are what irk the educrats most of all. If schools fail to make adequate yearly progress toward proficiency (each state sets its own targets), NCLB requires that parents hear about it, and then get the option to transfer their children to other public schools, or receive a modest stipend to enroll them in after-school tutoring programs, public or private. The

provisions seem to be working. The *New York Times* recently profiled several school districts across the country that, due to NCLB pressures, are scrambling to bring all their students up to speed by identifying and helping the kids who need special support. New math and reading scores, out this summer from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, showed real gains in elementary schools and a narrowing of the racial achievement gap.

New Yorkers, especially, should understand that poor and minority children can meet high standards if asked and spurred to do so. When Mayor Bloomberg announced two years ago his plan to end social promotion in the third and fifth grades, education experts howled. The city's Panel for Educational Policy (the successor to the Board of Education) even threatened to veto the plan. Bloomberg won final approval for the reform only after he had three of the panel's appointees dismissed. Nevertheless, the plan may have begun to work: with educators focusing on student achievement—offering summer-school programs, after-school tutoring, and Saturday classes—third and fifth graders posted gains on city math and reading tests this year.

(A similar story has unfolded at the City University of New York. Back in 1999, the city's four-year colleges introduced stricter admissions policies and the end of open enrollment. Critics like Democratic mayoral candidate Fernando Ferrer predicted that low-income, minority, and immigrant students would never be able to meet the tougher new standards. What happened?

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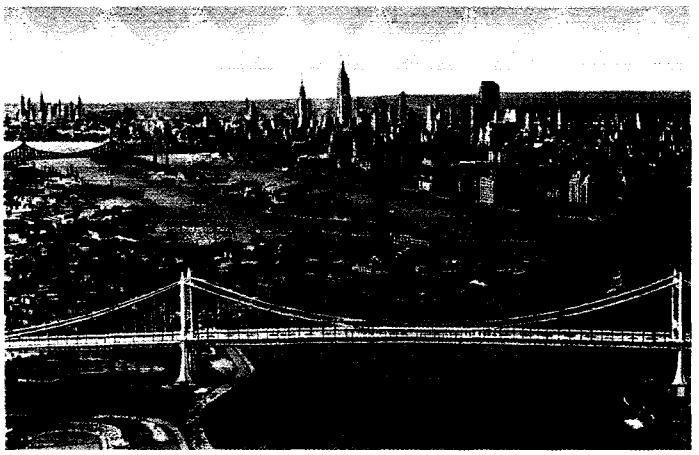

CUNY is now thriving, turning out Rhodes Scholars, and black and Latino enrollment is way up.)

NCLB isn't perfect. As Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings admits, such issues as how to test special-ed students and students with limited English proficiency need smoothing out. But NCLB's key tenets—high standards and expectations, clear measurement and accountability, and consequences for results—must remain, no matter how much educrats complain. —*Charles Sahm*

Poshlost at Ground Zero

Governor Pataki was right to kill the PC International Freedom Center.

After four years of feckless quiescence, the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation suddenly mewled with one voice. Its board members expressed displeasure with their leader, George Pataki. The governor, to his credit, had canceled the proposed International Freedom Center at Ground Zero. In its place, he announced, there would be a new museum. Its principal aim: to "tell the story of September 11."

The Center would have addressed slavery and other human rights issues not directly related to the craven attacks on the World Trade Center. Novelist Vladimir Nabokov had a word for the kind of political correctness behind the center: *poshlost*, a Russian term meaning fashionable, Philistine, clichéd, bogus nonsense. The instance he gave in the late 1940s, in which Philistinism tumbled over the edge into evil, was: "We all share in Germany's guilt." The subtext at the Center was: "We all share in radical Islam's guilt. They killed many Americans, but we had slaves; there was genocide in Western Europe; whose hands are that clean, anyway?"

However, a lot of people refused to buy the new *poshlost*. One was Debra Burlingame, sister of Charles Burlingame, the pilot of the plane that the terrorists crashed into the Pentagon on September 11. In an influential *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, she predicted that if plans for the Center went through, visitors who had come to see a true memorial to the fallen and learn the character of the evil men who killed some 3,000 defenseless victims would instead receive a "high-tech, multimedia tutorial about man's inhumanity to man." The public would "be confused at first, and then feel hoodwinked and betrayed."

Others joined her cause, among them New York City's Uniformed Firefighters Association, which lost 343 members in the worst-ever attack on American soil. And the police union, which lost 23 men and women. By summer's end, the Center was in such bad odor that even the often PC Senator Hillary Clinton refused to support it. Her brief statement to the *New York Post*: "I am troubled by the serious concerns family members and first responders have expressed to me. I do not believe we can move forward until it . . . addresses their concerns."

The Center's prime movers had no such intentions. They could not make themselves acknowledge what almost all Americans know in their bones. Roman Catholics did not perpetrate the attacks; neither did Hindus, Klan members, Greek Orthodox Christians, Jews, Seventh-day Adventists, evangelicals, animists, Shintoists, Buddhists, or secular humanists. Radical Muslims did.

The Center is no more. It was rotten all the way through. All Pataki did was give a slight push: the implosion followed. —*Stefan Kanfer*

Forget the UN

It's outmoded, ineffective, and corrupt. Time to try something new.

September's United Nations summit confirmed what many conser-

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vatives have long believed: the scandal-ridden UN cannot reform itself—and cannot effectively legitimize the use of force needed to fight terrorism.

To a war-weary world, the UN seemed at its 1945 founding to be mankind's best hope to prevent further conflict. Yet the notion that the UN could become the central forum for the management of world affairs was quixotic from the start: only if the U.S.-Soviet alliance held firm would such a prospect even be conceivable, and by 1945 that alliance was already disintegrating. The Soviets would use their Security Council veto repeatedly to thwart Western interests, rendering the UN incapable of decisive action. In the Korean War and the first Gulf War—two major tests of the Security Council as a guarantor of collective security—the UN was an afterthought. In both conflicts, the United States and Britain dispatched military forces to counter aggression and only later sought UN approval. In 2003, during the second Iraq crisis, the UN spectacularly flinched from providing even that.

As Sir Brian Urquhart, a UN founding father, came to see, the organization's management structure makes it unworkable. With a secretary-general who lacks executive authority sitting atop a sprawling secretariat full of overlapping, incompetent, patronage-ridden bureaucracies, sclerosis is unavoidable. Since a handful of rich Western nations pay the bills, moreover, most member countries have no vested interest in seeing funds spent properly: glad-handed waste has been massive. Adding to the mess, the UN created over time almost 100 agencies, special funds, and commissions—semi-independent fiefdoms outside the secretary-general's control.

The UN security record in recent years is indefensible. Its failure to stop atrocities in Somalia, the moral and military debacle in Bosnia, the egregious human rights violations that UN "peacekeepers" committed in the Congo—all have sunk its credibility. And all that is before coming to Paul Volcker's inquiry into the Iraq Oil-for-Food program. As Volcker has proven, the initiative soon degenerated into a multibillion-dollar scam, marked by sordid corruption and a massive failure of leadership by the secretary-general and his management team, one of whom was making $150,000 a year illegally from the program. Yet the UN summit failed to adopt the reforms needed to prevent future scandals of this kind.

Worse still from a collective security standpoint was the summit's failure to agree on a clear definition of terrorism. You would like to think that after the al-Qaida attacks on New York, Madrid, and London, the mass murder of children in Beslan, Russia, and the continuing carnage in Israel and Iraq, the summit could have come up with such a definition. The secretary-general offered a good one: "[A]ny action is terrorism if it is intended to cause death or bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, with the purpose of intimidating a population, or compelling a government or an international organization to do something." Intense opposition from Muslim states, however, prevented it from being accepted. For the Islamic states, one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter; the killing and maiming of innocent civilians remain part of the "right" to resist "occupation" and part of "legitimate" wars of liberation. Though the final declaration featured a ringing denunciation of terrorism, it left Islamic leaders free to claim that suicide bombings in Israel or Iraq aren't terrorism. Of course, these are the same Islamic states that since 1970 have ensured that the UN General Assembly has taken a position that legitimizes terrorism. They have also mounted a long-standing and grotesque campaign against Israel's right to self-defense.

Maybe the tough-minded new U.S. ambassador to the UN, John Bolton, can bang together enough heads in Turtle Bay to get meaningful reforms. But if not, there is an alternative source of legitimacy, outside the UN, that the Bush administration might consider. The administration could take the lead in creating an independent, treaty-based organization, modeled on NATO, that could establish rules governing the use of force against terrorism. Such an alliance would be perfectly legitimate in international law, under Chapter VIII, Article 53 of the UN Charter, so long as its mission was to safeguard the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. Its threat to use force would be more credible and could thwart terrorist attacks by preemptive action where necessary—something the UN will never do. —*Ray Raymond*

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Who's Killing New Orleans?

It's hard to worry about racism and poverty after you've been murdered.

THOMAS DWORZAK/MAGNUM PHOTOS

Fire and flood engulfed New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

Nicole Gelinas

President Bush's advisers insist that he's not abandoning conservatism in his commitment to rebuild the Gulf Coast. But a mark of conservative thinking is properly identifying problems before dedicating billions to solving them. The president hasn't done that in New Orleans. Instead, in his September 15 speech from Jackson Square, Bush vowed to combat "poverty"—a foe that cities and the feds have never conquered in their long war against urban decay.

In the language of Lyndon Johnson, Bush ascribed the violence and desperation Americans saw in New Orleans in the days after Hurricane Katrina to "deep, persistent poverty

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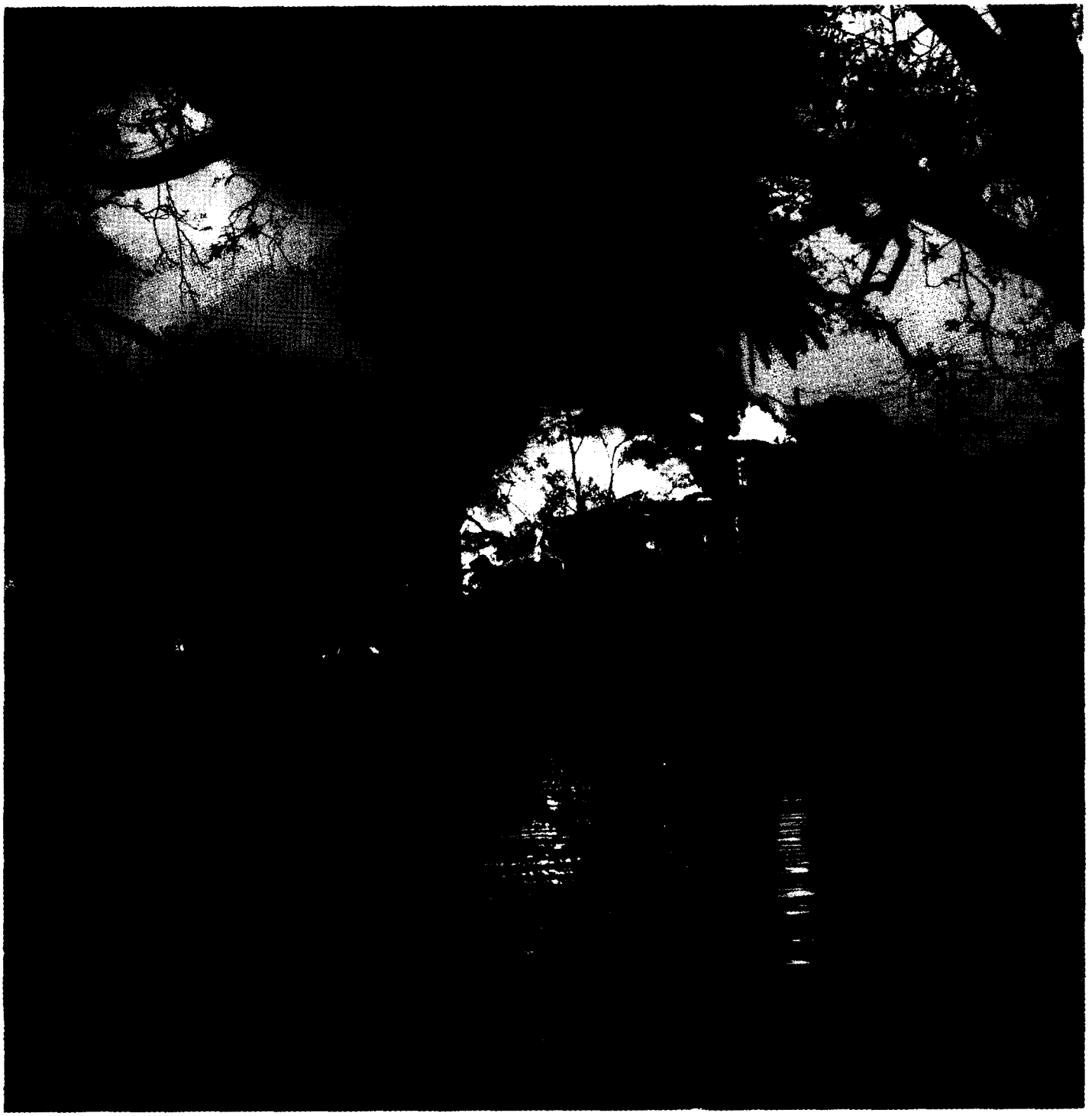

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in this region. . . . That poverty has roots in a history of racial discrimination, which cut off generations from the opportunity of America." The president then issued a call to the nation: "We have a duty to confront this poverty with bold action. . . . Let us rise above the legacy of inequality."

But amorphous talk about poverty, racism, and inequality won't help New Orleans rebuild. New Orleans has two more pressing—and much simpler—problems that need fixing right now.

The first is obvious: "Gulf Opportunity Zone" or no, businesses won't invest in New Orleans again, and workers won't live there again, unless the government protects the city with the best flood barriers that technology and money can provide. This job is hard—but civil engineering actually works, unlike the social engineering that Bush has invited with his lament about urban Southern poverty.

The second job is less obvious. New Orleans's immutable civic shame, before and after Katrina, is not racism, poverty, or inequality, but *murder*—a culture of murder so vicious and so pervasive that it terrorizes and numbs the whole city.

In 2003, New Orleans's murder rate was nearly eight times the national average—and since then, murder has increased. In 2002 and 2003, New Orleans had the highest per capita city homicide rate in the United States, with 59 people killed per year per 100,000 citizens—compared to New York City's seven. New Orleans is a New York with nearly 5,000 murders a year—an unlivable place. The city's economy has sputtered over the past generation partly because local and state officials have failed to do the most elementary job of government: to secure the personal safety of citizens.

The president wasn't alone in his misperception of what ails New Orleans. In the aftermath of the storm, hand-wringers wondered why they hadn't noticed before that so many American blacks live in Third World conditions—supposedly only because they're black. CNN's Wolf Blitzer voiced white America's knee-jerk best: "You simply get chills every time you see these poor individuals. . . . So many of these people, almost all of them that we see, are so poor, and they are so black," he mused on the air.

But Americans didn't notice this before because it's not true. Despite the president's rhetoric, and despite those indelible images from the Superdome and the Convention Center, New Orleans is just as much a black success story as a black failure story.

Yes, New Orleans has a 28 percent poverty rate, and yes, New Orleans is 67 percent black. But nearly two-thirds of New Orleans's blacks aren't poor.

Yes, it's true that nearly 25 percent of New Orleans's families live on less than $15,000 a year, according to the 2000 Census. But 19 percent of New York's families live on less than $15,000—and it's much more expensive for poor people to live in New York, making them poorer. The median monthly New York rent is $705, and the median monthly mortgage is $1,535—compared with monthly costs of $488 and $910 respectively in New Orleans.

Despite the images of collective helplessness broadcast after Katrina, New Orleans does not have a stratospherically high government-dependency rate. In 2002, it had 6,696 families on cash welfare, or 3.6 percent, compared with New York City's 98,000 families, or 3.2 percent. In 2000, 7.8 percent of New Orleans households received Supplemental Security Income, compared with 7.5 percent in New York.

Anyone familiar with New Orleans knows that the city is filled with hard-working people—most of them black. Welfare reform, in New Orleans as in the rest of the country, worked; between 1996 and 2002, Louisiana cut its welfare rolls by 66 percent. The only virtue of New Orleans's tourism-dependent economy is that those with few skills who want to work can work; the city's unemployment rate was 5.2 percent during 2004, lower than New York's 7.1 percent.

But not all black New Orleanians are consigned to working as busboys or hotel maids. The city long has had a substantial black middle class, and indeed a black affluent class.

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After Katrina hit, Jarvis Deberry editorialized in the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* about a black New Orleans doctor who had evacuated to Houston before the storm: "Like so many of New Orleans's black doctors, lawyers, accountants, dentists, politicians, professors and entrepreneurs, [Critty Hymes] made her home in eastern New Orleans, an area hit especially hard by the floodwaters," Deberry wrote. "Despite its devastation, the area known as New Orleans East, the other part of the 9th Ward, hasn't gotten much attention. . . . Despite the wealth, fame or stature of many of its residents, for too many people now covering New Orleans, the area simply doesn't exist."

New Orleans's legacy of black achievement is part of the complicated race history of a complicated city, and dates back to before emancipation. "There has been a black middle class in New Orleans dating back to the antebellum period," says native New Orleanian Edward F. Haas, a professor at Wright State University in Ohio who specializes in the history of the modern South.

During slavery, New Orleans had the largest urban population of free blacks after Baltimore. As Haas relates, the children who were the product of "mixed sexual unions" were often sent to Europe for education by their white fathers—and often returned better educated than many of their white local counterparts. With the help of substantial inheritances, they formed a black elite that persists in New Orleans to this day.

Likewise, less wealthy New Orleans blacks, "with their commitment to education, industry and self-reliance, defied all stereotypes of black inferiority" and formed New Orleans's vibrant black middle class, Deberry wrote in his *Times-Picayune* piece. "[O]ther southern cities would develop black middle classes that would dwarf New Orleans's. But that doesn't mean the one in New Orleans ever went away." The city's historically black colleges—Dillard University, Southern University at New Orleans, and Xavier University—have never stopped churning out educated, middle-class black graduates.

The fruits of this culture of black achievement are evident. New Orleans's government has been predominantly black for three decades. Its corporations fill white-collar and clerical jobs alike with qualified black workers. Ray Nagin, New Orleans's current black mayor, embodies both of these trends: he was an executive at New Orleans's Cox Cable (now part of Cox Communications) before he took office three years ago.

"In 2003, New Orleans's murder rate was nearly eight times the national average."

New Orleans does have its predominantly black and predominantly white neighborhoods. But though no land of perfect color blindness, it is more integrated on a day-to-day level, both in neighborhoods and in the workplace, than New York and certainly than a city like Boston. Moreover, it's simply not true that black New Orleanians disproportionately lost their homes after Katrina because the whites built long ago on the only high and dry land available. Lakeview, a rich white area of $1 million homes (yes, because of the backyard views of Lake Pontchartrain), is devastated. St. Bernard, a parish of mostly working-class and middle-class white bedroom communities, was devastated too.

But what about the TV pictures of those black people in the Superdome and the Convention Center in the five days after Katrina, ragged, dirty, desperate, and screaming for help? Isn't this a grave symbol of how unjustly "we" treat the black community?

It's safe to assume that *these* were New Orleans's poorest, all thrown together, with no way out of the city before the storm. Those who sought public shelter undoubtedly included many of New Orleans's thousands of welfare families.

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But even those images aren't representative of New Orleans's poorest. The people who took refuge in the Superdome and the Convention Center were photographed after days of stewing in filth and fear. The post-Katrina Superdome image was an emblem of a failure of local and state governments to evacuate vulnerable citizens before the storm, and an equal failure of the federal government to respond after the storm. It's a symbol of the need for rational civic planning and for a rational approach to federal homeland security—not for a new government war on poverty.

However, one other aspect of New Orleans's post-Katrina nightmare was representative: the murderous crime wave that seemed to grip the city just hours after the eye of the storm had passed. Unfortunately for New Orleans's future, the media now are dismissing the terrible crimes that took place as a figment of hurricane survivors', and of reporters', imaginations.

"The media's willingness to report thinly attributed rumors may . . . have contributed to a cultural wreckage that will not clean up easily. . . . Victims, officials and reporters all took one of the most horrific events in American history and made it worse than it actually was," *New York Times* media reporter David Carr lectured in mid-September. "Four weeks after the storm, few of the widely reported atrocities have been backed with evidence," the *Times-Picayune* concurred on September 26.

Even the Right now denies the violence that New Orleans suffered in the storm's aftermath: "We now know, thanks to valuable post-mortems by the *Los Angeles Times* and the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, that a great deal of the 'great reporting' was in fact great rumor mongering," *National Review*'s Jonah Goldberg grumbled. "The stories of rape and murder in the Superdome were all unfounded. Six people died in there, tragically. But nobody was murdered. All of the major newspapers contributed to the hysterical environment."

It's true that one horrific rumor that Katrina spawned was indeed false—dozens of people weren't raped or killed at the Superdome or at the Convention Center. But the media have extrapolated from this hollow relief a new myth: that New Orleans *wasn't* a haven for mayhem after the flood. This is a comforting revision. But obscuring an already blurry truth won't help New Orleans rebuild. New Orleanians did prey on their fellow citizens in the aftermath of Katrina—and some of their victims were killed.

The *New York Times*'s own Dan Barry, a longtime metro columnist with no history of lying, hallucinating, or repeating tall tales, witnessed the corpse of a murder victim that had been lying out for days smack in the middle of New Orleans's central business district. "A Louisiana state trooper around the corner knew all about it: murder victim, bludgeoned, one of several in that area," Barry wrote on September 8.

Of a separate incident, the *Times-Picayune* reported on August 31: "Neighbors in the area near Hickory and Short Streets Uptown said a body has been floating nearby in five feet of water since the unidentified man was shot five times on Monday. Neighbors said the shooting was reported, but police and other officials apparently have been unable to respond."

Further credible incidents of violence: the *Times-Picayune* reported August 30 that the day after the storm a New Orleans cop was "in surgery at West Jefferson Medical Center after being shot in the forehead . . . by a looter after he and another officer confronted a number of looters." The paper reported September 7 that one 21-year-old man was in custody for allegedly "shooting at a relief helicopter from an apartment window."

The *New York Times* has confirmed that one person was murdered at the Convention Center and one at the Superdome, and the *Times-Picayune* has confirmed that a National Guardsman was attacked by an assailant wielding a metal rod in the darkened Dome. The coroner's early report implies that the murder rate among those stranded in Katrina's aftermath was at least five times New Orleans's normal murder rate. This real, not imagined, violence prevented New Orleans from getting the level of volunteer and professional help it needed after Katrina.

STEVEN CLEVENGER/CORBIS

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Even before post-Katrina scenes like this, the Big Easy's residents lived in uneasy fear.

Adding to the confusion, multiple reports implicate the police in the violence, though whether the cops were justified or not isn't clear. These reports haven't been debunked. For example, the Associated Press reported September 4 that "police shot eight people carrying guns on a New Orleans bridge Sunday, killing five or six of them, a deputy chief said." *The Weekly Standard*'s Matt Labash offered evidence of another shooting by police during the week that New Orleans was in chaos: "On the street right in front of the Convention Center, I see a circle of chairs around a black tarp," Labash wrote. "A body lies underneath it. It's been there since the night before. I pull the tarp back and see a black man lying in a pool of blood. . . . Witnesses tell me what happened. Dwight Williams . . . says the night before, a New Orleans Police Department vehicle pulled up. 'For whatever reason, the gentleman made a move to the car,' he says. 'It took five seconds, the entire incident. The cop opened the door, shot him, and that was it.'"

The *Times-Picayune* reported a similar incident on September 1; it's unclear if this was the same one that Labash chronicled, as it occurred in a neighborhood "near" the Convention Center. "Near the former St. Thomas housing development, a squadron of police, some in tactical gear, were clustered in an intersection. . . . [A] man who appeared to be dead from a gunshot wound lay on the ground. It was unclear what had occurred. Police said there had been a shootout as they forced a reporter and a

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photographer out of a passing car at gunpoint . . . . They took away a reporter's notebook and tossed the photographer's camera on the ground before returning them and telling the pair to leave," the *Times-Picayune*'s Gordon Russell reported.

What about rape? Jake Staples, an official of the National D-Day Museum near New Orleans's central business district, stayed at the museum during and after Katrina. He told the *Times-Picayune* that he had watched, hidden, from the second floor as a gang rape occurred on the street below. "He could hear a young woman berating a group of five young men, alternatively cursing them and begging them not to abandon her," according to the *Times-Picayune*'s report of Staples's first-person account. " 'Then one of the men stopped and backhanded her,' Staples said. Then he witnessed a gang rape. 'Afterwards, she got up, pulled her pants up and kept following them. They were her meal ticket, I guess. . . . This area was a jungle.' " Police made two arrests at the Superdome for attempted sexual assault.

And what about the general atmosphere of lawlessness after Katrina? There is simply no question that the city was an acutely dangerous place after the storm hit. For example, as Brenda Austin and five family members walked from their eastern New Orleans home to the Convention Center, "their journey wasn't without travail," the *Times-Picayune* reported on September 1, because, according to Austin, "someone started shooting at them."

On September 7, the *Times-Picayune* chronicled the experience of one group that had braved the storm in Algiers (a New Orleans neighborhood on the west bank of the Mississippi). "The day after the hurricane, [Vinnie] Pervel was carjacked as he tried to check on his other properties in the neighborhood," the paper recounted. "Two guys clubbed him on the head with a sledgehammer, grabbed his keys and stole his van. . . . The next afternoon, as Pervel and his mother, [and neighbors Gregg] Harris and [Gareth] Stubbs[,] stood on their porch, a gunfight between armed neighbors and 'looters' erupted on the corner of Pelican and Valette streets. . . . The neighbors, whom Pervel would not identify, shot two of the men. . . . 'We just couldn't comprehend it, a gun battle in front of your house,' said Stubbs."

The next day, the paper reported the firsthand account of one prominent black New Orleans citizen, Antoinette K-Doe. "She'd heard the constant sound of gunfire and seen the marauders in her neighborhood," the paper noted.

The *New York Times* confirmed that there had been yet further credible allegations of lawlessness, in a September 29 article that tried to separate fact from myth. "Police officers said shots were fired for at least two nights at a police station on the edge of the French Quarter. The manager of a hotel on Bourbon Street said he saw people running through the streets with guns," the *Times* noted.

Just plain looting was rampant after Katrina—and most of it took place *before* floodwaters rose. (As of late September, police had arrested about 400 individuals in the aftermath, one official told me—more than half of them for alleged looting. In an emptied city with only a few thousand holdouts, that's a significant number.)

"Looters seemed to rage almost at will, clearing out boutique clothing shops and drugstores alike," the *Times-Picayune* reported on August 31. In a separate article: "Looting . . . was so widespread Wednesday that police were forced to prioritize their overwhelmed enforcement effort." In yet another article the paper reported: "[O]ne New Orleans cop . . . loaded a shopping cart with a compact computer and a 27-inch flat screen television. Inside the store, the scene alternated between celebration and frightening bedlam."

The *Times-Picayune* cataloged the extent of the looting nearly a month after the storm, on September 26: "Just as Katrina's receding waters revealed acres of ruined houses . . . the post-storm cleanup also raised the curtain on a trail of mass looting that left even the most jaded New Orleans cop awestruck. As search-and-rescue crews staged house-to-house searches for survivors . . .

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they repeatedly stumbled upon stacks of merchandise—from large appliances still in the box to knotted tangles of hastily pilfered jewelry. . . . A large percentage of the items are still tagged with bar codes from . . . Wal-Mart, a store that was all but cleaned out during six hours of utter pandemonium the day after Katrina hit. . . . 'The only things left on the shelves were the books and the educational materials,' [said one officer]. . . . 'Talk about a lot of effort for nothing,' [another officer said]. 'When that levee broke, they had to leave it all behind.' "

We may never know the extent of post-Katrina mayhem. As the *New York Times* noted on September 29: "A full chronicle of the week's crimes, actual and reported, may never be possible because so many basic functions of government ceased early in the week, including most public safety record-keeping."

"White and black residents are afraid to go out at night beyond the clear boundaries of well-patrolled areas."

But the grisly truth is that awful violence in New Orleans is never an aberration—whether before or after Katrina. Just consider the following snippets from the *Times-Picayune*, all printed in the month *before* Katrina hit. They seem just as hysterical as some of Katrina's wildest tales.

"Violence tests the limits of mortician's art." "Some neighborhoods are being terrorized by thugs who have figured out that they have little to fear from the justice system." "Almost nightly images of violent crime bludgeon New Orleans." "Violent crime has emerged as . . . an ongoing source of national embarrassment." "Murders are so common we have become numbed to their sting." "Killers are killed, Orleans police say." "The city is becoming scarier." "Violence shows no signs of letup." "Three men killed in seven hours; all are shot to death on New Orleans streets." "After a short reprieve from murder and mayhem in New Orleans on Friday, six men lost their lives." "This is Iraq right here in New Orleans. By 2020 there might not be any black people left." "There's a different type of murder occurring now and a different type of criminal out there." "New Orleans area continues to log murder after murder." "Something must be done to curb the violence festering in New Orleans." "Now we're in a bloody war nobody's safe from."

Day in and day out, Katrina or no Katrina, New Orleans is America's most dangerous city. But the numbers don't tell the whole story. White and black residents, rich and poor, of good neighborhoods and bad, are afraid to go out at night beyond the clear boundaries of well-patrolled areas like the heart of the French Quarter—and night means 6:00 PM, not 2:00 AM. Everyone in New Orleans knows someone who has been violently mugged—and everyone knows someone who knows someone who has been violently killed.

The violence is often random but never surprising: a young mother and her seven-year-old daughter shot to death in their home. A 90-year-old former school principal, the widow of the former chancellor of Southern University, and her adult daughter shot and stabbed to death in their home. A Vietnamese immigrant murdered in her grocery store. A middle-aged craftsman shot to death and burned in *his* home. A young, mentally impaired man shot as target practice in a housing project. A tourist bludgeoned to death near his business-district hotel.

And, of course, scores and scores of young black men get shot each year, so many that the deaths seem the same—the formulaic end of short lives marked with short, formulaic obituaries. Many of these murdered young men are in the drug trade, but many aren't. Gregory

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Williams, who was set to attend Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College this fall, was shot to death outside his home earlier this summer, because he was "in the wrong place at the wrong time," the *Times-Picayune* reported. "Williams's mother, Doris Williams, proudly fingered her son's college acceptance letter while recounting his final moments on earth."

Writes *Times-Picayune* crime-scene photographer Eliot Kamenitz of the work of documenting death in the Big Easy: "[E]ach Sunday after Easter . . . St. Louis Cathedral holds its Mass for victims of violent crimes. I work on Sundays and the yearly event is usually my assignment. Large placards line the outside gates of the church. On them are hundreds of photos of smiling faces of the deceased, many with their newspaper obituaries. It is years' upon years' worth of the slaughter in the streets of New Orleans. Before the service . . . I see the loved ones left behind. Sometimes I talk to them, and finally get to say I am sorry for their loss. . . . I'm sure I've met some of them before: they behind the yellow tape, I behind my camera."

Most of New Orleans's violence, like the killing of Gregory Williams, is black on black; working-class blacks in marginal neighborhoods suffer the most. New Orleans boasts (or boasted, before Katrina's floodwaters) blocks and blocks of old, sturdy, abundantly cheap private housing stock. Many working-class blacks live on tree-lined streets just blocks away from the most affluent neighborhoods. But ceaseless open-air killing makes some of New Orleans's predominantly black working-class neighborhoods, including much of the historic 9th Ward, terror zones.

Preachers put up hand-lettered billboards in ragged neighborhoods to remind residents, THOU SHALT NOT KILL—but in vain. What then-police superintendent Eddie Compass said earlier this year of pre-Katrina violence became just as true of post-Katrina violence: it's "a small group of nefarious individuals preying on the weak." One 9th Ward holdout told the *Times-Picayune* a month after Katrina that he was enjoying his empty neighborhood after the storm, because there were "no more gunshots in the darkness."

The shocking element of the bloody permanency of New Orleans's pre-Katrina crime wave is this: the city already significantly cut crime once in the past decade, with help from some of America's premier policing minds, including the late Jack Maple, onetime NYPD deputy commissioner of crime-control strategies.

In 1994, New Orleans's murder rampage peaked at 424 killings (the equivalent of 7,100 in New York). As fear simmered to a boil, Richard Pennington, the police commissioner under former Mayor Marc Morial, overhauled the police department with input from Maple, federal officials, and others. Pennington and federal officials stripped the department of 300 corrupt and otherwise unfit officers (nearly one-fifth of the force, including two now-convicted murderers). Pennington also implemented New York's Compstat, applying sophisticated statistical analysis and computer modeling to track crime trends. Murder fell steadily until 1999.

But it was way up again before Katrina—and the wholesale carnage of this past summer shocked even longtime observers of the city's dangers. "If you aren't fed up with the murder rate in New Orleans, you can only belong to one [group]: those people doing the killing," the *Times-Picayune* editorialized on August 12. "The city is becoming scarier. New Orleans has logged more murders than it had at this time last year, and people weren't feeling so safe then."

But *why*?

New Orleans officials estimate that 70 percent of the city's everyday murders are drug-related. New Orleans is still in the grip of a full-scale crack epidemic; the *Times-Picayune* stories of present-day "open-air crack markets" recall an earlier, bleaker era in urban America. Drug dealers kill for turf. Addicts kill for money for their next fix—or they are killed because they steal from their dealers, or they're robbed for the money they bring into the projects. In 2003, the *Times-Picayune* reported, 40 percent of New Orleans's murder victims tested positive for drugs, mostly cocaine. And after Katrina, Nagin wasn't wrong when he said that "crazed drug

IRWIN THOMPSON/DALLAS MORNING NEWS/CORBIS

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Nothing is more important to New Orleans's future than improving the city's ineffective, scandal-ridden, and demoralized police force.

addicts" and "violent gang members" were responsible for some of the post-flood violence.

Drug-turf wars in the violent underground economy have only worsened since the city closed one major housing project a couple of years back, as the project's drug distributors have had to fight for new turf. Resettlement after Katrina could exacerbate this tension.

The culture of death that pervades New Orleans's economy of pushers and addicts spills blood across the rest of society; the city's drug dealers have no compunction about killing child witnesses to drug crimes, and regular, wholesale street shootouts claim many innocent victims.

New Orleans's legions of weak, female-headed, underclass black families supply generation after generation of what George Will calls "lightly parented" young men to fuel the carnage. They also have a plentiful supply of weapons to do it with. One coroner notes that it takes twice as long to do an autopsy today than a decade ago, as the proliferation of AK-47s, and now of the SKS from China, means that bodies often are riddled with not just one or two bullet holes but a dozen.

Before Katrina, the New Orleans Police Department took much of the blame for the rising murder rate. The force is not up to professional standards of interrogating witnesses and suspects and of collecting evidence for prosecution. Worse, just a week before Katrina hit, one cop was arrested for alleged rape and kidnapping; ten others have been arrested on

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criminal charges over the past two years, "ranging from shoplifting to conspiracy to rob a bank," the *Times-Picayune* reports.

But federal officials and outside observers say that in fact the department, before Katrina, was a vastly improved force compared with the pre-Pennington era. Moreover, a dysfunctional prosecutor's office and a dysfunctional state judicial system, in which only one in four murder arrests ends in a conviction, undermine the force. Only 32 percent of felony drug distributors go to jail after conviction, compared with 66 percent nationwide. Some judges mysteriously and repeatedly release violent-crime suspects on bail. From improper collection of evidence to poor prosecution to lenient and inconsistent sentencing, New Orleans cannot keep its drug dealers and violent criminals behind bars. "The perception is that the state judicial system has failed," says James Bernazzani, the FBI's special agent in charge of New Orleans.

Because of these failures, witnesses are afraid to report crimes or violent suspects to the police, because they "know in two to three days, that individual will be back on the streets. They think: 'I'll become the next victim,' " says Bernazzani. In addition, he reports, relatives and friends of those killed don't go to the police but engage in "street revenge, as killings beget killings." Police booked one 20-year-old drug dealer for murder in three separate killings—but had to drop each set of charges because no one would testify against him. A year ago, he was killed on a street corner himself. Another suspect—charged, and released, on a first-degree murder charge in an unrelated case last summer—was found shot to death on the street this July.

"Our biggest challenge is that we continue to have to put the same violent criminals in jail over and over again. We honestly believe that our murder rate would be cut by 60 percent if the violent offenders stayed in jail and did their time," then–deputy police superintendent (and now acting police superintendent) Warren Riley said in 2004.

Months before Katrina hit, New Orleans knew that it was in acute crisis. The city already had hired Louis Anemone, former NYPD chief of department, to devise a plan to combat the murder resurgence and to show commanders and officers how to carry it out. "It was a challenge," Anemone told me, "but I was sanguine about our chances to improve the safety and security of the residents and visitors." The city's nonprofit Metropolitan Crime Commission also had devised some suggestions for judicial reform; above all, the commissioners concluded, "Criminal Court Judges should substantially increase the number of drug dealers sent to jail."

But New Orleans's long history of street carnage is not a topic for polite discussion in Katrina's aftermath. Pols and pundits have a million solutions for the city, from building more affordable housing to ensuring better schools to creating an incubator for the nation's "creative class" to offering tax credits for resettlement. But none addresses the city's most obvious, and intractable, problem, the one that has kept New Orleans from thriving for years.

Hiding the truth doesn't help New Orleans. The Big Easy's evacuated citizens already know how violent their city is. And one reason that they might not come back is that their latent disgust with crime has now been overlaid by those images of rampant post-storm crime. Evacuees—and businesses—know that even Cat-5 levees can't protect them from the day-to-day mortal fear of living in New Orleans. As Bernazzani told me: "What you saw after Katrina wasn't done by outsiders."

Nagin's 17-member rebuilding commission, announced in late September, doesn't boast one person with the expertise even to address the city's festering crime—without which Nagin will never win the confidence needed for the city's rebuilding. Likewise, every dime that the federal government spends on "community development"—and Senator Mary Landrieu has requested $50 billion—will be wasted unless the feds, in conjunction with state and local officials, tackle first things first: making the city safe enough to encourage the middle-class and working-class tax base, black and white, to return. Rebuilders who think that the criminal

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underclass will stay away while other residents repopulate the city will prove fatally mistaken.

Even before Katrina, Nagin was begging for a new mandate, and even a new dedicated property tax, to beef up the NOPD, which had one-third fewer officers per capita than Gotham. But the lack of departmental leadership after Katrina, and the alleged misdeeds of some cops, mean that the NOPD now must overcome an acute crisis of confidence. Police Superintendent Compass abruptly resigned four weeks after the storm, and nearly 250 cops are AWOL or still can't get to work.

Counselors who debriefed rank-and-file cops after Katrina said that those who tried to protect their city after the floodwalls burst were angrier at their own commanders than at the storm itself or at any other level of government, "charging that their [department] let them down . . . and left individual groups of officers to care for desperate people on their own," the *Times-Picayune* reported September 17. "Sad to admit it," one counselor told the paper, "but the predominant dynamic here is anger and disillusionment."

Moreover, since TV showed several cops looting consumer goods during the flood's aftermath, and since it showed two cops allegedly beating an unarmed pedestrian in the French Quarter in early October, the department's years of work to overcome its long-standing public image of entrenched corruption and malfeasance have gone down the drain. One hotel proprietor, with some film corroboration, told CNN that eight armed cops commandeered a floor of his hotel as a way station to bus valuable looted goods out of the city.

So what can the feds do with some of the billions they're so bent on spending? If Bush wants to rebuild New Orleans, his administration must take the lead in creating a permanent safety zone in the city. He can start by beefing up New Orleans's police force, committing funds to double its size over the next five years, as the key element of the city's civic infrastructure. But the feds should do this only if they tie the money to a real policing plan like the one Anemone was working on—and tie it to real results as well. Bush has ample precedent for such a plan, in the Clinton administration's 1990s grants to cities for community policing, and in his own No Child Left Behind Act, which ties federal money to local accountability.

"If Bush wants to rebuild New Orleans, his administration must take the lead in creating a safety zone in the city."

Nothing will work, of course, unless the Louisiana government first creates a functional prosecutor's office and state judicial system.

Governor Kathleen Blanco has called for two special sessions of the state legislature to enact a menu of tax credits and other rebuilding initiatives, but her proposals don't begin to address the systemic pre-Katrina failures that will hobble post-Katrina recovery. It's at least as important for her to call a special legislative session to enact Rockefeller-style drug laws to take this generation's violent criminals off the streets permanently. The legislature should mandate automatic prison sentences for those convicted of possession of drugs with intent to distribute, and for those convicted of possession of illegal firearms. The state also must stop releasing on bail suspects charged with violent crimes. Only with the support of a working judicial system—from prosecutors to judges to prisons—can New Orleans implement the policing strategies that have worked so well in New York.

Only when New Orleans can assure safety can it begin to make up some of the losses it has sustained over a generation of mismanagement. Only then can it build a real private economy and robust public institutions that will attract a thriving middle-class population.

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New Orleans has lost more than a fifth of its population since the 1960s. According to a 2001 study, those who left between 1990 and 2000 were mostly young and educated. City officials blame these losses on oil-industry consolidation over the past generation, which took New Orleans jobs to Texas.

But that's not the whole story. New Orleans has lost middle-class jobs partly because investors are fed up with the city's entrenched public corruption. "Outside companies don't invest because they are sick and tired of the kickbacks," Bernazzani says. "New Orleans is deprived of a tax windfall." (Just this summer, the feds indicted four cronies of previous mayor Morial, including Morial's uncle, for alleged public-contract abuses—and before Katrina, the FBI was investigating alleged widespread corruption at the city's school board, which isn't under mayoral control.) A corrupt government cannot police itself or its city, nor can it provide adequate public services of any kind. As taxpayers and businesses decamp in disgust, the city thus has fewer fiscal resources with each generation.

Those who remain, if they are not part of the problem, try to insulate themselves with private security guards or a sense of fatalistic resignation. Nagin made an impassioned speech about the lack of civic outrage over the skyrocketing murder rate just two days before Katrina hit: "I think this is kind of a put-up-or-shut-up moment," he said. "How concerned are you, city of New Orleans, about fixing this problem? . . . Are we going to be entertained by the violent nature of these murders, or are we really going to try to fix it? . . . I just don't see . . . the outrage. I see people sad, I see them kind of bewildered, I see them kind of looking out in space. But I don't see enough, 'Goddammit, I've had enough of this.'" But many of those who were outraged had already voted with their feet.

Unfortunately, too, the city's attempts to encourage investment have only made things worse. In the two decades since much of New Orleans's oil industry left for good, city leaders have concentrated on one business to replace it: tourism.

Tourists in New Orleans pay high hotel and sales taxes, and demand few government services (and most don't know enough about New Orleans's high crime rate to be afraid of visiting). But tourism doesn't create good jobs that form the basis for a strong middle class. Even so, during the horrid early 1990s, when crime skyrocketed and thousands left, New Orleans and Louisiana spent nearly a decade's worth of political capital cajoling Harrah's to complete construction of its once-abandoned Canal Street casino. And one of Nagin's first instincts in Katrina's wake was to propose a special "casino zone" to lure tourists back to town.

The cumulative tragedy of New Orleans is the slow but violent wasting away of a strategic port city with a legacy of priceless physical assets. Those who care about New Orleans often fret that the city's underclass youth grow up in isolated neighborhoods and attend execrable schools in an insular city that offers no opportunity. They're right. But New Orleans offers no opportunity partly because it has no real private economy to speak of besides the drudgery of tourism and the violence of drugs. That's why two early post-Katrina local moves *are* promising. The elected school board voted one month after Katrina to convert all 13 schools on the city's smaller west bank to charter schools to get them up and running again quickly, while the mayor has asked the governor to help him create a citywide charter system, to be run in partnership with foundations, universities, and businesses. In addition, Nagin has proposed that the federal and state governments slash income and business taxes in New Orleans and in surrounding areas across the board, so that the private sector can pump new investment into the city.

The federal government can build floodwalls that hold up during storms—and the feds can commit to assuring personal safety while New Orleans rebuilds its city and its tax base.

But only New Orleans, and Louisiana, can build a city that holds up day after day.

Given New Orleans's culture of lawlessness and violence, post-storm looting was almost inevitable.

DAVE MARTIN/AP WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

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Mexico's Undiplomatic Diplomats

It's time for Mexican consulates to stop aiding and abetting illegal immigration.

Heather Mac Donald

It's a strain being a Mexican diplomat in the United States these days, as the plaintive expression on Mario Velázquez-Suárez's dignified features suggests. Diplomacy may be the art of lying for one's country, but Mexican diplomacy requires taking that art to virtuosic heights. Sitting in his expansive office in Mexico's Los Angeles consulate, Deputy Consul General Velázquez-Suárez gamely insists that he and his peers observe the diplomatic duty not to interfere in America's internal affairs, including immigration matters. "Immigration is an internal discussion," he says. "We have to respect that regardless of whether it pleases us."

Well, at least one part of the deputy consul general's statement is true: immigration *is* an "internal discussion." The decision about who can enter and permanently reside in a country is central to its identity. The rest of his statement, though, is utterly false. Mexican officials here and abroad are involved in a massive and almost

RICHARD CUMMINS/CORBIS

Mexicans' cultural identity remains strong in the U.S., as L.A.'s many Day of the Dead celebrations show.

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daily interference in American sovereignty. The dozens of illegals milling in the consulate's courtyard as Velázquez-Suárez speaks, and the millions more radiating outward from Los Angeles across the country, are not a naturally occurring phenomenon, like the tides. They are there thanks in part to Mexico's efforts to get them into the U.S. in violation of American law, and to normalize their status once here in violation of the popular will. Mexican consulates are engineering a backdoor amnesty for their illegal migrants and trying to discredit American immigration enforcement—activities clearly beyond diplomatic bounds.

Mexico's governing class is not content simply to unload the victims of its failed policies on the U.S., however. It also tries to ensure that migrants retain allegiance to *La Patria*, so as to preserve the $16 billion in remittances that they send to Mexico each year. Mexican leaders have thus tasked their nation's U.S. consulates with spreading Mexican culture into American schools and communities. Given the American public's swelling anger about illegal immigration, it's past time for Washington to tell Mexico to cease interfering and for the Bush administration to start enforcing the law.

Just how shameless is Mexico in promoting illegal entry into the U.S.? For starters, it publishes a comic book–style guide on breaching the border safely and evading detection once across. Mexico's foreign ministry distributes the *Guía del Migrante Mexicano* (Guide for the Mexican Migrant) in Mexico; Mexican consulates along the border hand it out in the U.S. The pamphlet is also available on the website of the Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior, or IME (Institute for Mexicans Abroad), the cabinet-level agency that promotes *Mexicanismo* in the U.S.

Nodding to U.S. law, the guide does briefly remind readers that "mechanisms for legal entry" into the U.S. exist and are the surest way to get in. But the book primarily consists of "practical advice" for entering illegally: *do* drink salt water and cross when the heat is lowest; *don't* wear heavy clothing when fording a river. *Do* keep your coyote in sight; *don't* send your children across the border with strangers—a Mexican variation on the usual parental advice. And *don't* "throw rocks or objects at officials or at patrols since this is considered a provocation by those officials." (This last piece of advice clearly hasn't taken hold: attacks on the border patrol have steadily increased in number and viciousness.)

The guide's recommendations on how to avoid detection once in the U.S. are equally no-nonsense: *do* keep your daily routines stable, to avoid calling attention to yourself; *don't* engage in domestic violence—the Marvel comic–type illustration shows a macho man, biceps bulging, socking a woman a big one in the jaw. *Don't* drink and drive because it could result in deportation if you're arrested.

Mexico backs up the publication with serious resources for the collective assault on the border. An elite law enforcement team called Grupo Beta protects illegal migrants as they sneak into the U.S. from corrupt Mexican officials and criminals—essentially pitting two types of Mexican lawlessness against each other. Grupo Beta currently maintains aid stations for Mexicans crossing the desert. In April, it worked with Mexican federal and Sonoran state police to help steer illegal aliens away from Arizona border spots patrolled by Minutemen border enforcement volunteers—demagogically denounced by President Vicente Fox as "migrant-hunting groups."

Disseminating information about how to evade a host country's laws is not typical consular activity. Consulates exist to promote the commercial interests of their nations abroad and to help nationals if they have lost passports, gotten robbed, or fallen ill. If a national gets arrested, consular officials may visit him in jail, to ensure that his treatment meets minimum human rights standards. Consuls aren't supposed to connive in breaking a host country's laws or intervene in its internal affairs.

The border-breaking guide is just the tip of the iceberg of Mexican meddling, however. After 9/11, Vicente Fox's government realized that the immigration amnesty that it had expected from

HECTOR MATA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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Some 60 percent of Mexicans believe that the southwestern U.S. belongs to Mexico, as this L.A. soccer placard hints.

President Bush was on hold. So it came up with the second best thing: a de facto amnesty, at the heart of which is something called the matricula consular card.

Mexican consulates, like those of other countries, have traditionally offered consular cards to their nationals abroad for registration purposes, in case they disappear. In practice, few Mexicans bothered to obtain them. After 9/11, though, officials at *Los Pinos* (the Mexican White House) ordered their consulates to promote the card as a way for illegals to obtain privileges that the U.S. usually reserves for legal residents. The consulates started aggressively lobbying American governmental officials and banks to accept matriculas as valid IDs for driver's licenses, checking accounts, mortgage lending, and other benefits.

The only type of Mexican who would need such identification is an illegal one; legal aliens

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already have sufficient documentation to get driver's licenses or bank accounts. Predictably, the IDs flew off the shelf—more than 4.7 million since 2000. Every day, illegals seeking matriculas swamp the consulates. Every seat and place to stand in the modest, white stucco Santa Ana, California, consulate was filled one morning this July, most of the people there seeking the 200 or so matriculas that the consulate issues per day.

The Mexican government knows just how subversive its matricula effort is. A consulate's right to issue such a card to its nationals is indisputable; where the Mexican diplomats push the envelope is in lobbying governments to adopt it as an American ID. In announcing the normalization-through-the-matricula push, then-foreign minister Jorge Castañeda was characteristically blunt: "We are already giving instructions to our consulates that they begin propagating militant activities—if you will—in their communities."

And yet, Mexico's consuls comically pretend that they know nothing of their countrymen's immigration violations and wouldn't possibly interfere with America's response even if they did. "Our formal policy is not to ask the immigration status, because we don't have anything to do with that," explains the outspoken consul for Santa Ana, Luis Miguel Ortiz Haro Amieva, speaking in his narrow office above the consular reception area. "Our services don't have anything to do with immigration status," he says implausibly.

This pose gets more challenging all the time, because legal immigration from Mexico has basically stopped. Eighty percent of all Mexicans who arrived in the U.S. over the last decade crossed the border furtively, a rate that has only increased of late. These illegal arrivals now outnumber legal Mexicans in the U.S. And the more the disabilities of illegal status diminish, the greater the future flow of illegals will be.

You would think that an ID obtainable simply by showing Mexican nationality would not elicit fraud from Mexican nationals themselves. But Santa Ana consul Ortiz Haro whips out a stack of counterfeit Mexican voting cards and birth certificates that the consulate has confiscated from matricula applicants, bought at document bazaars like Los Angeles's MacArthur Park. Some applicants can't be bothered to get their real Mexican documents; others want to avoid extortion by relatives who demand payment to send those documents, says Ortiz Haro. He is confident, however, that the consulate can spot all fakes and verify, say, a birth certificate from the remotest Mexican peasant village. The FBI demurs: it opposes the use of the matriculas as American IDs because the consulates lack adequate safeguards against counterfeiting.

The consuls' protestations of ignorance about their nationals' immigration statuses are particularly far-fetched when it comes to tracking down missing border breakers. "If someone crosses but hasn't been heard from," says Santa Ana protective-services director Mildret Avila, speaking in Spanish and carefully avoiding details of that crossing, "the family will come to us and say: 'Our brother was supposed to arrive but hasn't come.' We'll contact the consulates all along the border—in San Diego, Calexico, Denver, and Phoenix, who will ask the Immigration and Customs Enforcement and check the hospitals and prisons to try to find him."

What about inquiring with the coyotes? "We never hear from them," Avila says. "We don't know who the family pays; the coyotes just disappear." Note that at this point in the interview, Avila is implicitly acknowledging that the Mexican nationals in question are illegal. Not for long, though. Why don't you tell someone who is in the country illegally that he should return to Mexico and get permission to enter? I ask. "We don't know if someone has papers or not." You could ask, couldn't you? "Yes."

Now, arguably, individual consuls aren't obligated to police compliance with American law—that responsibility lies with American authorities. But Mexico's disrespect for the law regarding its illegal migrants actually begins on its side of the border. Mexico's own regulations require that all exits from the country go through established crossing points. Decades

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ago, Mexico enforced that rule. Now, any Mexican can cross wherever he wants. A few years ago, the governor of Baja California proposed reviving the law as a means of preventing desert-crossing deaths. He swiftly found himself denounced for kowtowing to the Americans, writes former U.S. ambassador to Mexico Jeffrey Davidow in his book, *The Bear and The Porcupine*. The proposal died.

Mexicans view migration to the U.S. as a fundamental human right, says Davidow; no laws should stop it, they believe. In addition, nearly 60 percent of Mexican respondents polled by Zogby in 2001 said that the southwestern U.S. really belongs to Mexico. Only 28 percent disagreed.

"Mexico's consuls comically pretend that they know nothing of their countrymen's immigration violations."

Mexican consuls denounce any U.S. law enforcement effort against illegal immigration as biased and inhumane. For the moment, they still tolerate deportations if officials pick up the illegal Mexican right at the border and promptly set him down on the other side—whence he can try again the next day. Once in the U.S., however, an illegal gains untouchable status, in the consuls' view.

In 2002, the Denver consulate planted sympathetic stories in the *Denver Post* about an illegal Mexican high school student, Jesus Apodaca, who could not afford out-of-state tuition to Colorado colleges. Consulate spokesman Mario Hernandez lobbied Colorado legislators to award in-state tuition to Apodaca. When the stories ran, Republican congressman Tom Tancredo, a vocal opponent of illegal immigration, suggested that Apodaca might more properly be deported. Such impertinence was more than Hernandez could bear. "This is an arrogant use of power," he declared. "I don't think Mr. Tancredo realizes what he is doing to this family, which is already vulnerable." The family's "vulnerability," of course, was wholly of its own making.

Colorado governor Bill Owens disagreed with the consulate's contention that the state should treat Apodaca as a legal resident for the purpose of state-subsidized tuition. He didn't dare suggest that Apodaca actually be—gasp!—deported. Nevertheless, in retaliation for Owens's opposition to a tuition grant, consul Leticia Calzada undiplomatically urged Mexican tourists to boycott Colorado and visit Wyoming instead.

No less righteously angry was San Diego's consul, following the border patrol's arrest of a family of illegal aliens near the consulate. The family was on its way to pick up matriculas. Objected Consul General Rudolfo Figueroa: "We feel outraged over the way [the arrest] was handled. This was an act of bad faith." The consul filed a formal complaint with the border patrol; the Mexican embassy in Washington demanded—and got—a formal investigation into the matter. Mexico's foreign ministry said that the arrests violated a "gentleman's agreement" that its consulates could carry out their duties without the presence of law enforcement. The ministry might ponder why there should be any conflict between Mexican consular duties and the rule of law.

Boston's consul general sharply protested the arrest of several illegal Mexicans this April. Ipswich, New Hampshire, police chief W. Garrett Chamberlain had grown frustrated with the federal government's refusal to take custody of illegal aliens that his deputies reported to immigration agents. So he charged a Mexican illegal for criminal trespass—for being in a place without legal authority. A chief in a nearby town followed suit. Mexican officials went berserk: if this legal move succeeded—and police chiefs across the country immediately declared interest in using it—it would breach the nationwide sanctuary for Mexico's illegals.

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Pulling out all the stops, the Mexican government paid for the defendants' legal representation—another departure from traditional diplomatic practice, which forbids interference in a host country's judicial process unless it is patently unfair. Boston consul general Porfirio Thierry Muñoz Ledo declared the Ipswich trial "legally invalid, discriminatory and a violation of human rights." Yet the New Hampshire chiefs weren't using the law against the defendants because they were Mexican but because they were illegal. No legal Mexican need worry about arrest for trespass or for violations of the immigration law. Mexico's campaign against immigration enforcement, however, equates being Mexican with being illegal—a presumption that the country would undoubtedly label racist if an American articulated it.

For the moment, Mexican illegals inside the border are safely insulated from enforcement. A New Hampshire judge rejected the Ipswich indictment this August, ruling that local police departments may not use trespass law against immigration violators. Since the federal authorities virtually refuse to arrest immigration violators, and since most big cities forbid their police to inquire into immigration status, the nation remains one big sanctuary for illegals.

Mexico's consuls go even further in undermining U.S. border law. They're evolving a "disparate impact" theory that holds that any police action is invalid if it falls upon illegal Mexicans, even if that action has nothing to do with immigration. In July, the Mexican consul general in New York City, Arturo Sarukhan, lambasted Suffolk County, Long Island, officials for evicting over a hundred illegal aliens whose dangerously overcrowded housing violated fire and safety codes. The code enforcement constituted a "vilif[ication]" of the Mexicans, Sarukhan said, and inflamed community "tensions." Policing fire and safety codes is a core function of local government—unless it interferes with an illegal Mexican, in the New York consul general's view. He might note that the "tensions" in Long Island aren't due to the Suffolk County government

JONATHAN NOUROK/PHOTOEDIT, INC.

Mexican diplomats aggressively seek to promote *Mexicanismo* in American schools.

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but to the continuing influx of Latin Americans flouting American law.

Quick to defend individual illegals, the consuls just as energetically fight legislative measures to reclaim the border. Voters nationwide have lost patience with the federal government's indifference to illegal immigration, which imposes crippling costs on local schools, hospitals, and jails that must serve or incarcerate thousands of illegal students, patients, and gangbangers. Californians in 1994 launched the first protest against this unjustifiable tax burden by passing Proposition 187, banning illegals from collecting welfare. Mexico's Los Angeles consulate swiftly joined forces with southern-California open-borders groups to invalidate the law, even giving the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights in Los Angeles a computer and database to help build a case against the proposition. Mexican action against 187 apparently extended to Mexico as well. After a federal judge struck the initiative down in 1998, then–Los Angeles councilman, now mayor, Antonio Villaraigosa credited Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo with helping to undermine it.

In November 2004, Arizona voters passed Proposition 200 over the strenuous protests of the Phoenix consul general, who sent out press releases urging Hispanics to vote against it. The proposition merely reaffirmed existing law that requires proof of citizenship to vote and to receive certain welfare benefits. After the law passed, Mexico's foreign minister threatened to bring suit in international tribunals for this egregious human rights violation, and the Phoenix consulate supported the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund's federal lawsuit against the proposition.

Back in Mexico, politicians blast any hint that American legislators might obstruct illegals' free pass. In May, Congress passed the Real ID Act, which rendered driver's licenses issued to illegal aliens inadmissible for aircraft boarding and at other federal security checkpoints. Mexico's interior minister, Santiago Creel, lashed out: the law is "absurd, it is not understandable in light of any criteria," he said. In fact, the law was quite understandable: after 9/11, Congress wanted to make sure that federal authorities had properly vetted aliens given access to sensitive areas, such as airplanes. Creel, however, dismissed U.S. security concerns; the fact that the illegals "send their remittances and also benefit the Mexican economy," he declared, was far more important.

Former foreign minister Jorge Castañeda showed similar contempt for America's terrorism worries this July. He haughtily told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that Mexico would only cooperate with the U.S. on future security matters if the U.S. granted amnesty to its illegal aliens. Military-to-military cooperation is "very, very sensitive" to Mexicans, explained Castañeda. Americans' sensitivity to widespread contempt for its sovereignty—well, that's not even worth paying attention to.

The gall of Mexican officials does not end with the push for illegal entry. After demanding that we educate their surplus citizens, give those citizens food stamps, deliver their babies, provide them with doctors and hospital beds, and police their neighborhoods, the Mexican government also expects us to help preserve their loyalty to Mexico.

Since 1990, Mexico has embarked on a series of initiatives to import Mexican culture into the U.S. Mexico's five-year development plan in 1995 announced that the "Mexican nation extends beyond . . . its border"—into the United States. Accordingly, the government would "strengthen solidarity programs with the Mexican communities abroad by emphasizing their Mexican roots, and supporting literacy programs in Spanish and the teaching of the history, values, and traditions of our country."

The current launching pad for these educational sallies is the Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior. The IME directs several programs aimed at American schools. Each of Mexico's 47 consulates in the U.S. (a number that expands nearly every year) has a mandate to introduce Mexican textbooks into schools with significant Hispanic populations. The Mexican consulate in

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Los Angeles showered nearly 100,000 textbooks on 1,500 schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District this year alone. Hundreds of thousands more have gone to school districts across the country, which pay only shipping charges. Showing admirable follow-up skills, the consulates try to ensure that students actually read the books. L.A. consulate reps, for instance, return to schools that have the books and ask questions. "We test the students," explains Mireya Magaña Gálvez, a consul press attaché. "We ask the students: what are you reading about now? We try to repeat and repeat."

"Mexico's development plan announced that the 'Mexican nation extends beyond . . . its border'—into the United States."

Like most explanations given for Mexican involvement in American cultural matters, the justification for the textbook initiative is tortured. "If people are living in the U.S., of course they need to become excellent citizens of this place," says Magaña Gálvez. "If we can help in their education, they will understand better." But if the goal is American assimilation, why take a detour through Mexican history? "We *must* talk about Mexican history," she explains. "Our history is very rich, very intensive. It's important to know that history. The students will feel proud to become Americans if they feel proud of their country."

Immigrants have often tried to hold on to their native traditions, but not until recently did anyone expect American schools to help them do so. And it is hard to see how studying Mexican history from a Mexican perspective helps forge an American identity. The Mexican sixth-grade history book, for example, celebrates the "heroism and sacrifice" of the Mexican troops who fought the Americans during the Mexican-American war. But "all the sacrifices and heroism of the Mexican people were useless," recounts the chronicle. The "Mexican people saw the enemy flag wave at the National Palace." The war's consequences were "disastrous," notes the primer: "To end the occupation, Mexico was obligated to sign the treaty of Guadeloupe-Hidalgo," by which the country lost half its territory.

This narrative is accurate and rather tame by Mexico's usual anti-American standards. But a student in the U.S. could easily find himself confused about his allegiances. Is his country Mexico or the U.S.? Study exercises that include discovering "what happened to your territory when the U.S. invaded" don't clarify things. The textbook concludes by celebrating Mexican patriotic symbols: the flag, the currency, and the national anthem. "We love our country because it is ours," the primer says.

Mexican consulates also push for bilingual education in American schools, with the same odd logic with which they defend teaching Mexican history: teaching in Spanish, they say, will make students better English speakers. In this nonsensical claim, the Mexican officials are of course at one with the American bilingual-ed establishment. No surprise, then, that the National Association of Bilingual Educators has conferred awards on Mexico's education ministry for its support of Spanish-language instruction or that the association is represented on the IME's advisory council.

The IME also supplies adult-education materials in Spanish language and culture to community colleges and public libraries, and expects them to provide the space, teachers, and technology for distance-learning courses. "The Glendale library [in the Los Angeles suburbs] is beautiful," enthuses the L.A. consulate's Magaña Gálvez. It has converted half of its space to a Spanish language center using Mexico's course materials, she says.

Yet does this Spanish-language project actually result in the acquisition of English? I put this question to Socorro Torres Sarmiento, the community affairs coordinator in the Santa Ana

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consulate. She dodged the question: "It's difficult to do English at the same time," she said. In other words, probably not.

The consulates appear to regard local opposition to their bilingual agenda with bemused contempt. Santa Ana's consul, Ortiz Haro, says conspiratorially of his host city: "Here, we are living 'just English' in the schools. We have problems with some school districts [in Orange County], especially in Santa Ana. This high school district is involved in a lot of political issues, I think they have a very conservative point of view about education." Of course, what Ortiz Haro calls "political issues" is simply the school board's effort to follow the mandate of Proposition 227, the 1998 California voter initiative that sought to curtail bilingual ed in California schools.

But the consuls don't easily give up in fighting to preserve and increase the use of Spanish in the U.S. Socorro Sarmiento, Santa Ana's community affairs coordinator, visits Orange County schools to promote a Mexican government–sponsored drawing contest, *Éste Es Mi Mexico* (This Is My Mexico). When Sarmiento speaks to the students in Spanish, she—predictably—receives resistance: "The teacher says, 'You need to speak English, because we're not allowed to speak Spanish.'" Undaunted, Sarmiento reminds the children not to forget their Spanish—valid advice, but irrelevant to the school context, where teaching Mexican students English should be the paramount concern.

The contest that Sarmiento is promoting is another device to reinforce a sense of Mexicanness in students. It asks them to draw pictures expressing the "history, culture, natural resources, people, or traditional holidays [of] our beloved and beautiful country." Winners get a trip to Mexico City at the Mexican government's expense. Here again—in conservative Orange County, California, at least—some schools are skittish about sponsoring a Mexican government–designed program. Sarmiento responds that embracing Mexican culture is vital for students' self-esteem. In her school visits for the contest, she asks students if they know who the Aztecs were. "Unfortunately," she says, "they often don't." But if the students are to succeed in the U.S., a more relevant question might be: do you know who the Pilgrims were?

The U.S. Department of Education, no foe of multiculturalism, collaborates with some of Mexico's education initiatives. It helps bring hundreds of Mexican teachers to U.S. schools for part of the school year or during the summer—and not just to Mexican population centers like Los Angeles but also to recent outposts in the Mexican diaspora, such as Green Forest, Arkansas. The visitors suggest methods by which American teachers can incorporate Mexican dance, songs, and history, especially the indigenous cultures of the Toltec, Mayas, and Mistecas, into their lessons, notes Edda Caraballo, director of Migrant Education for the California Department of Education.

Such devotion to other countries' folkways would be unimpeachable if students overflowed with knowledge of America's history. As survey after survey has found, however, American students know next to nothing about their country's past. Only one-third of seniors at elite colleges could pick out the general at the battle of Yorktown from among William Sherman, Ulysses Grant, Douglas MacArthur, and George Washington, according to a 2000 American Council of Trustees and Alumni survey.

A huge proportion of the Mexican students receiving school-based training in *Mexicanismo* are illegal, making American help in preserving an alien culture all the more remarkable. The burden of illegal immigration has fallen heaviest on California, where one-quarter of the nation's illegals live and where one-quarter of the students don't speak English. The Anaheim school district in Orange County recently floated a $132 million bond measure to meet the costs of educating illegal aliens and their children. Santa Ana consul Ortiz Haro laughs as he recounts that Anaheim school administrators had wanted to bill Mexico for the cost of educating its illegal exports—a perfectly sensible idea that strikes him as ludicrous. Concern with border breaking is, to a Mexican consulate, well, just a little uncouth.

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L.A. mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, campaigning at a housing-project Cinco de Mayo celebration, supports welfare benefits for illegal aliens.

The audacity of Mexico's interference in U.S. immigration policy stands in sharp contrast to Mexico's own jealous sense of sovereignty. It is difficult to imagine a country touchier about interference in its domestic affairs or less tolerant of immigrants. In 2002, for example, Mexico deported a dozen American college students (all in the country legally) who had joined a protest in Mexico City against a planned airport. Such participation, said Mexico, constituted illegal domestic interference. (It would be interesting to know how many Mexican students—legal and illegal—have participated with impunity in demonstrations in

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the U.S. against American immigration and educational policies.) During his confirmation hearings, U.S. ambassador Jeffrey Davidow said innocuously that the U.S. would encourage high participation in Mexico's 2000 presidential election. A magazine editor rebuked him for "intromission in Mexico's internal affairs." Davidow didn't even dare visit the troubled state of Chiapas early in his tenure, knowing that the press would condemn it as illegal meddling.

Imagine if U.S. diplomats yowled constantly about Mexico's unfair policies toward illegal Americans. Mexico would expel them instantly. This summer, U.S. ambassador to Mexico Tony Garza closed the U.S. consulate in Nuevo Laredo after a particularly bloody period of drug violence that included the assassination of the town's police chief. Garza admitted to a reporter that he shut the consulate "in part" to punish Mexico for its failure to control the mayhem. Such measured language, in response to a public threat, provoked a sharp correction from Mexico's deputy foreign secretary, Geronimo Gutierrez. Garza's words, fumed Gutierrez, do "not correspond to the role of an ambassador."

But Mexican diplomats in the U.S. often express far harsher, and ad hominem, political judgments, with little regard for protocol. Santa Ana consul Ortiz Haro does not conceal his disdain in observing that California Propositions 187 and 209 [banning racial preferences], as well as the Minuteman Project, originated in Orange County. "We have six Congressmen here; five are Republicans. That would not be so bad," he adds magnanimously, "except for the kind of Republican: [Dana] Rohrabacher, [Ed] Royce; these are friends of Tancredo, who says we need the military on the border."

Mexican politicians are even starting to allege that American responses to illegal immigration *in the U.S.* are a violation of Mexico's sovereignty. This August, New Mexico governor Bill Richardson declared a state of emergency in four counties bordering Mexico, because of violence and devastation wrought by trafficking in aliens and drugs. City council members from the Mexican city of Ciudad Juárez branded Richardson's declaration an interference in Mexico's domestic affairs.

Mexico's own immigration policies are the exact opposite of what it relentlessly advocates in the United States. Its entry permits favor scientists, technicians, teachers of underrepresented disciplines, and others likely to contribute to "national progress." Immigrants may only enter through established ports and at designated times. Anyone not presenting the proper documentation and health certificates won't get in; the transportation company that brought him must pay his return costs. Foreigners who do not "strictly comply" with the entry conditions will face deportation. Steve Royster, who worked in the American consulate in Mexico from 1999 to 2001, presided over several deportations of Americans who had overstayed their visas. "They were given a choice: accept deportation or go to jail," he says.

Providing full college tuition or all-expenses-paid secondary and primary education for illegal American students in Mexico? Unthinkable. Until recently, U.S.-born children of Mexican parents weren't even allowed to enroll in Mexican public schools, reserved for Mexican citizens only. The parents would have to bribe officials for Mexican birth certificates for their kids. (The 1998 change in the Mexican constitution to allow dual nationality now makes enrollment by U.S.-born Mexicans possible.) "We're not friendly with immigrants; that's a big difference with the speech we have here with American schools," admits a Mexican diplomat.

What about textbooks to propagate American culture in Mexico? They would provoke an uprising against Yanqui imperialism. When President Ernesto Zedillo tried in the 1990s merely to revise Mexican textbooks to acknowledge contemporary cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico, he found himself denounced as a traitor. The revisions went nowhere.

Mexico's border police have reportedly engaged in rapes, robberies, and beatings of illegal aliens from Central and South America on

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their way to the U.S. Yet compared with the extensive immigrant-advocacy network in the U.S., few pressure groups exist in Mexico to protest such treatment. If Americans run afoul of Mexico's border police, watch out. In 1996, the Mexican police beat and shot in the back a teenage American girl who had led them on a high-speed chase in Tijuana. No one in the U.S. or Mexico raised a fuss, at least publicly.

Contrast that incident with another that occurred in the U.S. a few months earlier. A van-load of Mexican illegals in California had fled from the border patrol and the Riverside County deputies, throwing metal bars and beer cans at their pursuers and sideswiping cars to divert attention. When the van stopped, the deputies caught two of the fleeing occupants and beat them. Mexico's foreign ministry turned the beating into an international human rights incident, attributing it to "discriminatory attitudes that lead to institutional violence." Mexican diplomats formally protested to state and federal officials, and helped the two beaten Mexicans file multimillion-dollar lawsuits against the deputies and Riverside County. The State Department abjectly apologized and promised to set the FBI and Justice Department on the case. Had American authorities responded to the Tijuana beating with comparable anger and PR savvy, the Mexican backlash would have been fierce.

And if American politicians, presiding over a grotesquely mismanaged economy and the exodus of millions of citizens, adopted the grandiose rhetoric of Mexican politicians, they would be a laughingstock from one end of Mexico to the other. Heralding the creation of the IME and its parent agency, the National Council for Mexican Communities Abroad, President Vicente Fox argued that these bodies were necessary to "defend the human, civil, and labor rights [of Mexican migrants] more effectively, as well as to protect them against adversity or arbitrariness." The idea that the *American* government represents a heightened threat of "arbitrariness," compared with the corrupt Mexican bureaucracy, or that Mexico needs to protect its refugees from "adversity" abroad when it can't provide them with a reasonable living at home, is simply delusional.

"In 2001, just 34 percent of eligible Mexicans became citizens, compared with 67 percent of Asians."

Mexico's struggle to hold the hearts of its fleeing countrymen has worked. Mexican migrants have maintained a strong nationalism, exhibited through the "unfailing celebration of Mexican national, religious, and regional holidays, the conspicuous displays of patriotic symbols in Mexican neighborhoods and businesses, and in the low naturalization rate," writes University of California professor Luis Eduardo Guarnizo. In the last decade, the rate of naturalization among legal Mexican immigrants did improve, in response to the 1996 welfare-reform law, which reduced welfare eligibility for noncitizen immigrants, and to Mexico's authorization of dual nationality in 1998 (not exactly ideal motives for becoming citizens). The rate is still well below the immigrant norm, however. In 2001, just 34 percent of eligible Mexicans became citizens, compared with 58 percent of other Latin Americans, 67 percent of Asians, and 65 percent of Canadians and Europeans.

The Mexican government will push to control as much U.S. immigration policy as it can get away with. It's up to American officials to stop such interference, but the Bush administration simply winks at foreign attacks on immigration laws that it itself refuses to enforce. President Bush should worry less about upsetting his friends at *Los Pinos* and more about listening to the American people: illegal immigration, they believe, is an affront to the rule of law and a threat to American security. It can and must be stopped.

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The Conspiracy Against the Taxpayers

Why public servants live better than the public

Steven Malanga

For 50 years, public unions, healthcare lobbyists, and social-services advocacy groups have doggedly been amassing power in state capitols and city halls, using their influence to inflate pay and benefits for their workers and to boost government spending. The bill for that influence is now coming due, and it is overwhelming state and local budgets. For instance:

In New Jersey, legislators wooing union votes in 2001 voted a 9 percent hike in already rich pensions for the state's 500,000 public workers, even though a falling stock market was shrinking pension-fund assets. Today, those new perks have added $1 billion to Jersey's deficit-riddled budget and will add another $4.2 billion over the next five years.

In Washington State, the powerful teachers' union led a successful 2000 effort to win legislation mandating smaller class sizes, promising that it would cost taxpayers nothing, because surplus revenues could cover the program. This year, the cash-strapped state passed $500 million in new taxes to finance the mandate.

In California, then-governor Gray Davis and a union-friendly state legislature passed a series of bills that swelled the number of state employees who could claim disability retirement benefits and also expanded the number of ailments automatically classed as job-related to include HIV, tuberculosis, and lower-back pain. The flood of new disability claims will cost the state's retirement system some $465 million over five years, much of which will come out of taxpayers' pockets.

Such extravagances help explain why state and local government spending reached an all-time high relative to the national GDP during the 2002 recession, producing a fiscal hangover that continues today. Even in an expanding national economy, with tax revenues surging once more, state and local budgets teeter in precarious balance, long-term deficits pile up, and politicians hike taxes to close spending gaps. The budgetary excess has prompted the stirrings of America's newest tax revolt, as overburdened taxpayers grope for ways to curb the often automatic expansion of state and local government and to reduce the power of public unions.

The tidal wave of local government spending that produced this crisis built up as tax revenues poured into state and municipal coffers during the 1990s boom. State tax collections rose by 86 percent, or about $250 billion, from 1990 through 2001, while local property-tax collections soared by $90 billion, or 60 percent, during a period when inflation increased by a mere 30 percent. Rather than give surpluses back to taxpayers, government went on a spree, lavishing opulent pensions on employees and expanding politically popular health and education programs.

Unions and social-services groups were perfectly positioned to funnel this flood of surplus tax revenues into their pockets rather than back to the taxpayers. Starting with virtually no representation in the public sector 50 years ago, unions have relentlessly organized workers, so that in some states as many as 60 to 70 percent of public employees now are members. As a result, these unions wield huge clout at the ballot box, and union dues give them vast resources to sway public opinion and influence legislation.

Illustrations by Arnold Roth

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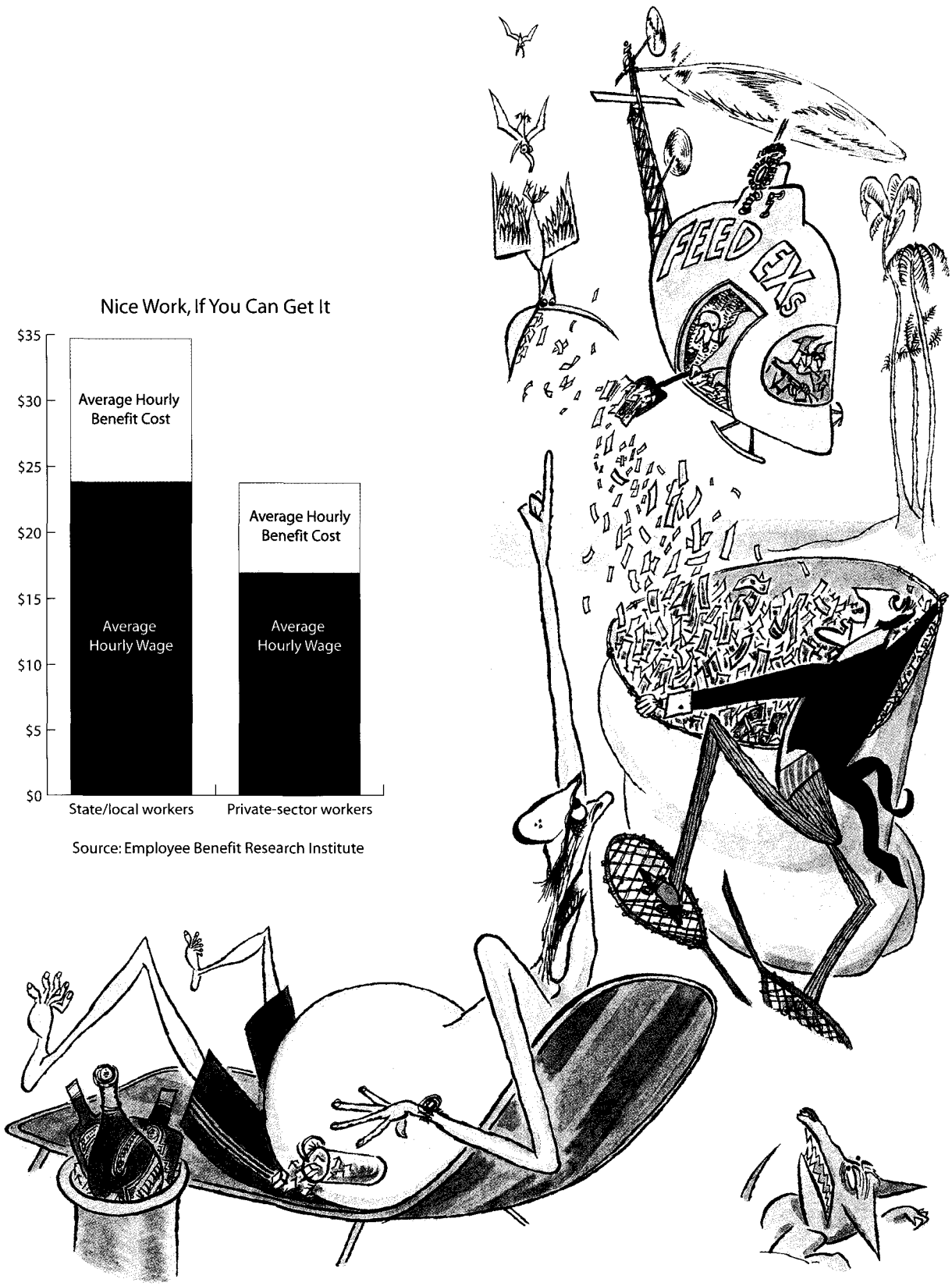
Nice Work, If You Can Get It

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute



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Gradually, public unions have aligned with local social-services and health-care groups that federal (and later, state and local) government began funding heavily during the War on Poverty of the 1960s and early 1970s—creating a new class of organization that lives off government money. These government-financed nonprofits and their union allies now make up a powerful coalition for bigger government and higher taxes in statehouses and big cities across the land, and they didn't let a nickel of the 1990s tax windfalls slip through their fingers.

All told, the swell of tax revenues produced about $93 billion in surpluses that state governments soaked up, the Cato Institute estimates; indeed, state general-fund spending alone increased by 85 percent from 1990 to 2001, much faster than the combined rate of inflation and population growth. Absurdly, this spending tempo carried over into the economic slowdown that began in late 2001 and lingered into 2003, as budgets that appeared to be on autopilot grew rapidly, producing $85 billion in collective state budget deficits in fiscal 2003 alone. To close their budget gaps, state and local governments boosted taxes and fees on citizens and businesses already hurting from the economic downturn. Local property-tax bills, for instance, grew by about 6 percent a year from 2001 to 2004, even though the consumer price index increased by only 6.7 percent for the entire period.

The prime budget buster has been the outlandish wage and benefits packages of public employees. Contractually guaranteed, they are untouchable even during economic slowdowns. Public-employee unions have so successfully used their political muscle that whereas public-sector compensation once lagged the private sector, now the reverse is true. Astonishingly, the average state and local government employee now collects 46 percent more in total compensation (salary plus benefits) than the average private-sector employee, according to the nonpartisan Employee Benefit Research Institute.

Wages average a hefty 37 percent higher in the public sector, but the differences in benefits are even more dramatic. Local governments pay 128 percent more, on average, than private employers to finance workers' health-care benefits, and 162 percent more on retirement benefits. Although the private sector's heavier concentration of low-wage service employment accounts for some of the wage and benefit gap, public-sector employees do better these days even when you compare similar jobs. Total compensation among professional workers in the public sector is on average 11 percent higher than for similar jobs in the private sector, for instance.

Other comparisons of public- and private-sector pay illustrate the same gap. The Citizens Budget Commission, a New York City fiscal watchdog, found that the average public-sector worker in the metropolitan region received 15 percent more in pay (not including benefits) than the average private worker. The gap was greatest in service-sector jobs, like security guards, health-care workers, and building-maintenance workers, where government on average paid 94 percent more than private firms. A 2001 Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council comparison of private- and public-sector average wages across the nation found that the average public-sector wage was higher in 35 states.

The public unions could only achieve this reversal because government is a monopoly, exempt from marketplace discipline. Competition can punish private companies that give away the store to employees or that perform ineffectively—driving the most profligate or inefficient out of business—but government is perpetual regardless of how it performs, and public unions have succeeded over the years in layering new perks and benefits on top of previous collective-bargaining gains that rarely get rolled back, even in tough times. Awash in contributions from the unions and agencies whose pay they set, the gerrymandered state legislatures and one-party city halls that hand out such largesse are well insulated from voter retribution. Thus taxpayers wind up being nicked by a thousand small benefits piled upon one another year after year.

The buildup of two benefits in particular—pensions and health care—is now producing

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major budget disasters nationwide. State and local governments used tax surpluses and the 1990s stock-market rise to gold-plate pension programs, with disastrous effect once the stock boom ended. By 2003, state and local pension funds had accumulated over $250 billion in unfunded liabilities, reports the National Association of State Retirement Administrators, leaving taxpayers on the hook. Pension costs in California's state budget skyrocketed 14-fold, from $160 million in 2000 to $2.6 billion in 2005, and are headed to $3.6 billion in 2009. New Jersey's pension costs are rising so quickly that without reform they will consume 20 percent of the state budget in five years, up from 8 percent this year. Illinois' state budget pension obligations will reach $4 billion a year by 2010, which could make them a bigger share of the state budget than local aid to education.

"The prime budget buster has been the outlandish wage and benefits packages of public employees."

The pensions for which taxpayers must now foot the bill far outshine what many of those same taxpayers in the private sector receive. In New Jersey, for instance, a 62-year-old state employee who retires after 25 years gets 50 percent more in yearly pension payments than an employee retiring with the same salary from the Camden, New Jersey plant of Campbell Soup, a Fortune 500 company, according to the *Asbury Park Press*. In addition, the state employee receives free health insurance for life to supplement Medicare, while full health benefits for private-sector retirees are now rare. In California, a public employee with 30 years of service can retire at 55 with 60 percent of his salary, and public-safety workers can get 90 percent of their salary at age 50. By contrast to these rich payouts, the small (and shrinking) number of private firms that still provide "defined benefit" pension plans—instead of the now-common "defined contribution" plans that transfer all risk to the worker—pay on average 45 percent after 30 years of service.

Retired public employees in many states also get cost-of-living adjustments to their pensions, which those private-sector workers who still have defined benefit plans rarely enjoy. In Illinois, for instance, where pension payments increase by 3 percent each year—faster than the rate of inflation for most of the last decade—an employee who retired ten years ago with a monthly pension of $4,000 would now be collecting $5,400 a month.

Features unheard of in the private sector drive up government pension packages still further. In New York and Oregon, public employees who contribute their own money to retirement plans get a guaranteed rate of return that is often far beyond what the market provides, and taxpayers must make up the difference. In Oregon, the return is 8 percent annually—about double what safe investments like treasury bonds provide today.

Rich health-care benefits have also added to a growing cost differential between the public and private sector. The federal government's National Compensation Survey estimates that 60 percent of state and local employees have dental coverage, compared with 36 percent of private-sector workers, while 43 percent of local government workers have vision care included in their health plans, versus just 22 percent of the private workers. More than 95 percent of state and local employees get paid sick leave, but just 58 percent in the private sector do.

Yet even with states facing fiscal ruin, legislators continue to pour out new pension kickers and health benefits. New Jersey lawmakers recently proposed 86 bills that would increase pension benefits, even though Acting Governor Richard Codey has declared that "these entitlements are strangling the taxpayers of New Jersey." In Illinois, legislators trying to craft an early retirement plan three years ago to help meet the state's budget crisis so enriched the plan at the last minute that it cost about

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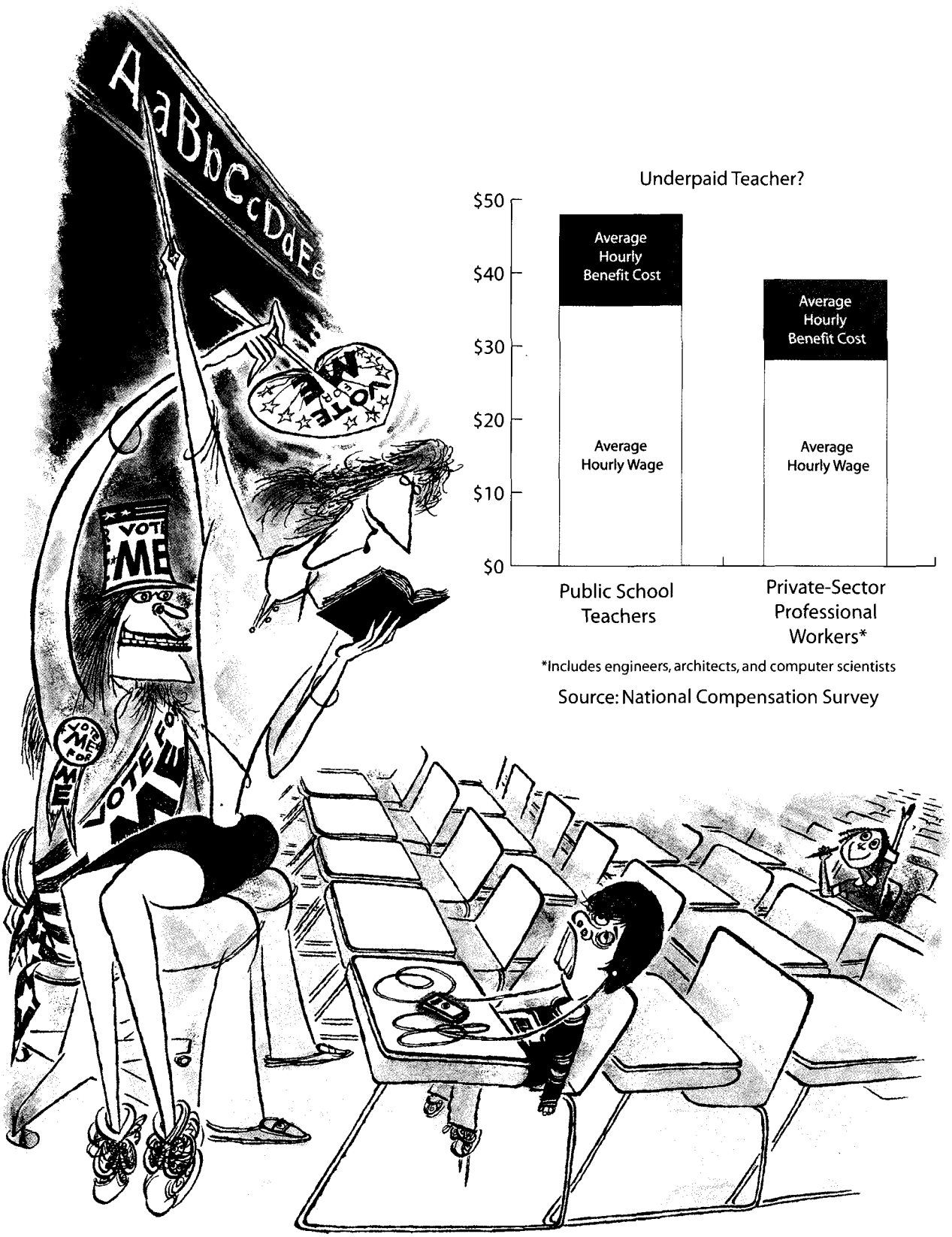

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$200,000 per retiree, instead of the projected $80,000.

Though union leaders defend these porcine compensation packages by claiming that they help private workers by preventing a private-sector race to the bottom on wages and benefits, high public-sector pay is partly responsible for holding down private wages. Rhode Island is an especially telling example. The state ranks fourth in average pay in the public sector but only 23rd in average private-sector wages, according to the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council. To cover its high public-sector employee costs, Rhode Island has consistently raised taxes, giving it the sixth-highest total state and local tax burden in the country, including one of the highest corporate tax rates and sky-high property taxes. Those high taxes drain investment capital out of private-sector firms, making it harder for them to finance improvements that boost productivity, which is what in turn allows private-employee wages to rise. Rhode Island businesses have among the lowest rates of investment capital per employee in the country—30 percent below the national average. Thus, the more the state enriches public workers, the further its private workers, who pay public-sector salaries, fall behind. Rhode Island should serve as a cautionary tale for other states: it has one of the highest rates of unionization in the public sector—62 percent, compared with 37 percent nationally.

In this environment, public-sector retirees have become the haves and private retirees the new have-nots. When New Jersey's pension crisis hit, the state's newspapers began chronicling the flight of private-sector retirees to states where taxes are lower. Beset by its high public-sector costs, New Jersey has the highest combined state and local taxes in the country, and the fourth-highest level of migration of citizens to other states. One retiree from a manufacturing job told a local newspaper that he moved to Delaware so that he could reduce his property taxes from $3,300 a year in Jersey to $615.

Yet public employees increasingly display a sense of entitlement about their rich benefits and pensions. Though the average public school teacher now retires at 59, and teachers work fewer months per year than private employees, attempts to raise teachers' retirement age to something closer to that of private-sector workers produce ominous warnings about shortages: "The idea of teaching until they are 66 makes many of our teachers wonder whether they want to be in this profession," a teachers' union lobbyist in Minnesota whined during a battle over pensions.

When the teachers' union whines, however, state pols snap to attention. Thanks to union-friendly legislation that requires public school teachers to become members or pay dues even if they don't join, the size and wealth of teachers' unions have made them fiercely intimidating lobbying and electoral forces almost everywhere. In Pennsylvania, a 1988 law requiring government employees to pay union fees helped double the size of the Pennsylvania State Education Association to 160,000 members, making it by far the most powerful lobbying force in the state, with 11 regional offices, 275 employees, and $66 million in annual dues. In California, the state teachers' association collects a formidable $150 million a year in mandatory dues from 335,000 workers. The CTA can quickly raise additional funds in an emergency, too, as when it hiked dues $60 a year to raise tens of millions more to fight Governor Schwarzenegger's special election.

Such resources have made teachers' unions among the biggest lobbyists and political givers at the state and local level. The Wisconsin teachers' union plunked down a state-high $1.5 million for lobbying in Wisconsin's most recent legislative session, while Minnesota's union was number two in its state, spending nearly $1 million. Oregon's teachers' union, with $15 million in annual revenues, spent nearly $900,000 on political contributions in the state's recent legislative races, and its support, according to the *Oregonian*, is one reason that Democrats now control the state's legislature and that a union ex-president is the governor's education advisor. In New Jersey's last legislative elections, four-fifths of all incumbents got donations from the state's teachers' union.

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In addition to higher wages and benefits, this mega-lobby increasingly has focused its might on schemes requiring big spending increases that will boost membership but are of dubious education value. A $2 million advertising campaign by California's teachers' union in the mid-1990s, for instance, won nearly $1 billion from the state government to cut class size, though considerable research shows that class-size reduction does little to improve student performance. The money set off a hiring frenzy that added 30,000 teachers (and union members) in three years, but a Rand Corporation study found no significant change in test scores of students who wound up in smaller classes. The program's only tangible result is that those without full credentials jumped from 1.8 percent of all California teachers to 12.7 percent, as school districts snapped up warm bodies to get the extra state aid.

In Washington State, too, the teachers' union pushed hard for class-size reduction as part of a package of bills that also mandated cost-of-living increases for teachers every year. When some legislators balked at the price tag, the union fired back with a $1.1 million ad campaign and massive rally. The narrow election victory last year of Governor Christine Gregoire, heavily supported by public unions, now seems to have turned the tide in favor of the additional spending, prompting $500 million in state tax increases.

With no other group able to spend anywhere near so lavishly on education advocacy, voters now get most of their information—or disinformation—from union lobbying and advertising. By relentlessly repeating that mean-spirited taxpayers shortchange America's kids, teachers' unions and education bureaucrats, with help from PTAs, have helped spread the myth that public schools are underfunded. An Educational Testing Services poll found last year that nearly half of Americans think that the schools spend on average just $5,000 per pupil a year—half the real amount.

Unions have also convinced Americans that teachers are underpaid, when they now take home considerably better pay packages on average than professional workers in the private sector. The federal government's national compensation survey estimates that local public school districts pay teachers an average of $47.97 per hour in total compensation, including $12.39 per hour in benefits—figures that far outstrip not only what private school teachers earn, but also the average of what all professional workers earn in private business, a category that includes engineers, architects, computer scientists, lawyers, and journalists.

Teachers' unions use their power over state lawmakers to smother cost-saving reform ideas in their cradle. When school reformers sought support from Connecticut state legislators, they found teachers' union representatives camped outside the office of the legislature's education-committee chair, keeping tabs on who met with him. When the Yankee Institute for Public Policy, a Hartford free-market think tank, held a media briefing on the state's budget, representatives of state-employee unions outnumbered the invited press. Institute board member George Schiele calls their pervasive presence in Hartford "Orwellian."

If state pols find teachers' unions so fearsome, little wonder that local school boards and municipal officials are no match for them at all. Lewis Andrews, a member of the Redding, Connecticut, board of finance, got a glimpse of their raw power when he proposed an innovative alternative to the town's plans to build a new high school for a projected 50-student enrollment increase. Supporters mailed out a proposal to local residents, suggesting instead that the town pay to have 50 kids sent to private schools and save the millions on construction. The state's education lobby, which resists any program that smacks of privatization, went ballistic. "At 11 o'clock on the morning the proposal started arriving in the local mail, the president of the State Senate stormed into my office and started screaming at me about it," says Andrews. "I have no idea how they even found out about it so fast in the capitol." Needless to say, Redding is building its high school.

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Mario Mancieri, a Portsmouth, Rhode Island, school administrator for 25 years whose task it was to negotiate with the local teachers' union, made clear to the *Providence Journal* last year how outclassed local school boards and officials are when they go toe to toe with statewide teacher-bargaining units affiliated with a national organization. "As soon as one community picked up a benefit, it was only a matter of time before it would migrate to your community," he explained. At every contract discussion, the union made demands that extended a benefit in new and often unique ways. "In my community, sick days went from 12 to 15 to 20. . . . Then many teachers began complaining they didn't take their sick days. . . . So [they said,] 'I'd like to be paid for the days.' So we paid it out in dribs and drabs over the years." Resisting proved too costly. "We made every effort to hold the line," Mancieri recalled, "but strikes are devastating to the community and we had three strikes." All this casts in a new light the No Child Left Behind Act's efforts to impose national accountability on an educational system whose management is local but whose employees are organized statewide and nationwide.

"Local public school districts pay teachers an average of $47.97 per hour in total compensation."

The education lobby's success most clearly shows up in the stunning growth of U.S. public education spending. In the last 30 years, per-pupil spending has nearly doubled, *after* accounting for inflation, to about $10,000 a year—far more than in most other industrialized countries, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, whose latest figures show that the U.S. outpaces Germany in per-pupil spending by 66 percent, France by 56 percent, and the United Kingdom by 80 percent. Even so, American students rank only in the middle of countries on student achievement tests, the OECD reports.

Municipalities have largely asked taxpayers to finance this spending through local property taxes. Since 1980, property-tax collections in the U.S have increased more than fourfold, from $65 billion to about $275 billion—"only" a doubling after accounting for inflation. Collections have well outpaced the combination of population and inflation growth, according to the Tax Foundation, which found that per-capita local tax collections rose by over 20 percent after inflation from 1987 to 1997. The reason is clear: Pennsylvania's Commonwealth Foundation estimates that in the two decades before mandatory union dues, local property taxes in that state increased just 14 percent after inflation. But in the 13 years after the 1988 legislation, property taxes went up 150 percent in real terms. Across the nation, much of that tax revenue has gone to finance new local education hires. Local public education employment grew 24 percent, or by 1.4 million workers, in the U.S. during the 1990s.

But it's not just public employees like the teachers who have created a conspiracy against the taxpayers. Equally rapacious are the nominally private social-services and health-care providers who have found a way of diverting some of the torrent of government dollars to their own pockets. With so much money available from Medicaid, one of the original War on Poverty programs, health care has become an increasingly government-financed business and has been transformed unrecognizably in the process. Coalitions of hospital administrators, nursing-home operators, health-care unions, and advocacy groups—strange bedfellows indeed—have emerged as powerful state and local political players, using their muscle to extract ever higher Medicaid spending and more expansive coverage.

Since 2003, Medicaid has surpassed even education funding as the biggest state budget item. California will spend $32 billion—29 percent of

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its budget—on subsidized health care this year, a 129 percent growth in the past decade. Ohio's $10 billion Medicaid program, left unchecked, will consume half of the state's general-fund spending by 2009. New York State's $44 billion Medicaid budget not only constitutes 42 percent of state spending but also is now a larger budget item than education spending even for many of the state's county governments, which are forced to share Medicaid's costs (as is not the case in other states).

Health-care advocates insist that Medicaid spending is growing because of increasing need, but the numbers tell a different story. As tax revenues poured in during the 1990s, state politicians funneled the money into ever more generous programs. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, two-thirds of Medicaid services that states now provide are optional under federal guidelines—from free ambulette rides to doctors' offices to dental and podiatry services. From 1994 to 2000, when U.S. poverty rates were plunging, spending on Medicaid, originally a program for the poor, grew by 30 percent after accounting for inflation, an American Enterprise Institute study shows. By contrast, Medicare spending, entirely controlled by the federal government, grew only half as fast, and total U.S. health-care spending increased by 18 percent after inflation.

While state officials now complain that they can no longer afford Medicaid programs that they themselves have designed, they don't stop using them for political payoffs and patronage. An egregious case in point is home health care, originally a money-saving idea, transformed by political deals into a budget buster. States first expanded home care as a way of cutting nursing-home costs. Yet the strategy has backfired, as unions, eyeing the proliferation of state-financed home-health-care workers, have organized them by the hundreds of thousands, pushing up their salaries and pensions while driving up union membership.

The Service Employees International Union's organizing of California's home-health-care workers in the 1980s is a textbook example. When the courts ruled that the workers were independent contractors who could not be organized, SEIU persuaded state legislators to pass a bill allowing counties to form authorities that could hire the workers as government employees, so that they could join the union. Then the union went to work in earnest to sign them up, including 74,000 in Los Angeles County alone—the single largest successful union-organizing effort in the United States since the United Auto Workers organized General Motors in 1937.

To help finance higher pay for these workers, the union then turned back to Sacramento, persuading legislators to vote millions in aid to the counties. Though in 1998 Governor Pete Wilson vetoed the legislation as too expensive, the next year new governor Gray Davis—who had received $600,000 in campaign contributions from SEIU, his biggest supporter—signed the law. Since then, the state's home-health-care spending has increased at nearly triple the rate of caseloads, costing taxpayers an additional three-quarters of a billion dollars. Local budgets are also straining under the pressure. Home-health-care-worker costs, now nearly $300 million a year, are the fastest-growing part of Los Angeles County's budget.

SEIU has managed to exploit other well-intentioned Medicaid programs for its own purposes. Washington State, for example, hoping to encourage family members to care for sick relatives at home, decided to allow Medicaid to pay family members or friends of recipients a nominal, state-subsidized fee to care for them, and such caregivers now account for about two-thirds of the state's subsidized home-health-care workers. But SEIU, sensing opportunity, campaigned for the right to organize these caregivers, eventually spending $1 million on a ballot initiative that had little formal opposition, because few understood its implications and because no other special interest would lose from the legislation—just the taxpayer. When SEIU then successfully signed up the program's 26,000 workers, doubling the union's state membership, it demanded big increases in salaries as well as health and pension benefits. One local newspaper even quoted a newly organized mother whom the state was now paying to care for her retarded son as saying, without irony, "We need a decent wage."

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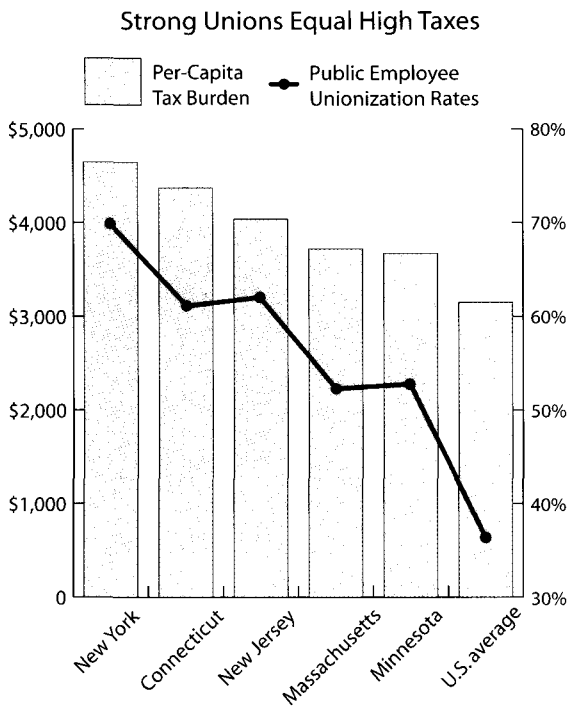
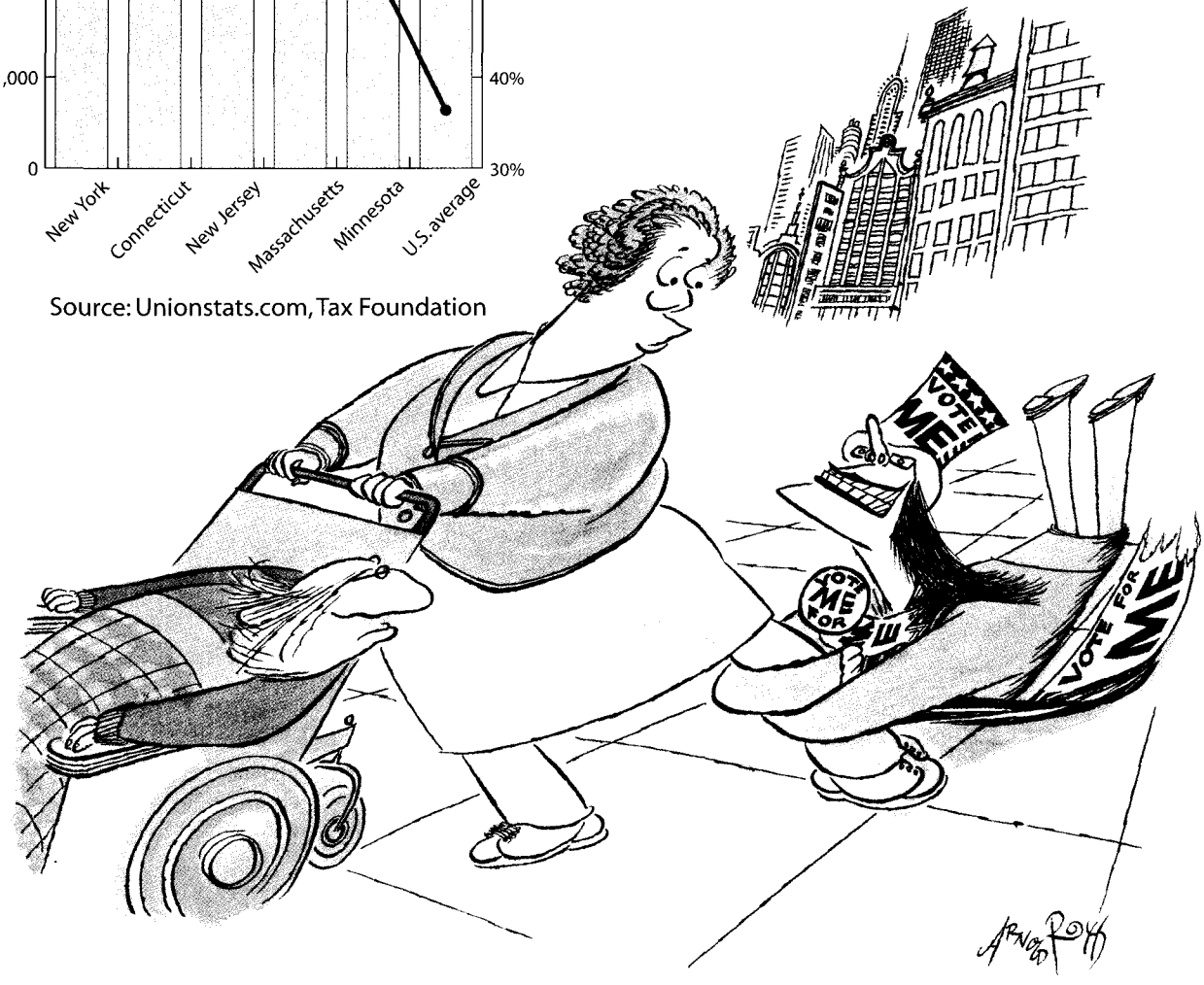
Having opened the door to this madness, Washington State can't shut it. Not only has SEIU obtained two raises—costing the state, which had a budget deficit of $2 billion this fiscal year, tens of millions in extra payments—but now the union is pushing for a law requiring the state to pay these workers for services like shopping and cleaning, which by one estimate would push the cost of home health care beyond the cost of residential care, defeating the home-health-care program's original purpose.



Source: Unionstats.com, Tax Foundation

With so much power and money at stake, health care is witnessing the transformation of former professional organizations into militant unions, as happened earlier to the National



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Education Association. The bellicose California Nurses Association, for instance, is using its vocal opposition to Governor Schwarzenegger as a springboard to national organizing. The union won a political prize in 1999 when Governor Davis and the Democratic-controlled legislature mandated that hospitals have a five-to-one ratio of nurses to patients, despite warnings from hospitals that the law would cost the state's health-care system $1 billion annually and be virtually impossible to implement because of a nursing shortage. Governor Schwarzenegger, responding to reports that hospitals were closing down emergency rooms and wards because they couldn't meet the staffing demands, delayed implementation of the ratios for three years, igniting a firestorm. The union followed him on dozens of out-of-state visits to picket his appearances, hired a blimp to fly over a Super Bowl party at his private residence, and spent $100,000 on ads attacking his decision.

Hardly a collection of Florence Nightingales, the union hired a former Teamsters' organizer as its head in 1993, and she began a long process of making it over, ending its affiliation with the American Nurses Association and allying it instead with the Teamsters. Since then, the organization has developed dreams of replacing the ANA around the country, using its victory on the California nurse-ratio issue as a recruiting tool in places like Hawaii, Michigan, Georgia, Arizona, and Illinois. Its rough-and-tumble tactics stand in stark contrast to those of professional nursing groups. The National Labor Relations Board recently overturned one of the union's organizing campaigns because members menaced anti-union nurses, showing up at the home of one opponent and telling him that his "little kittens would look good in a frying pan."

Such tactics are especially unsettling in health care. Even worse, when a Connecticut local affiliated with SEIU went on strike against nursing homes, workers engaged in vandalism and sabotage aimed at patients, according to an investigation by the state's attorney, including removing identification bracelets from Alzheimer's patients, feeding chocolate to diabetics, and loosening bolts on lifts used to support patients.

Government spending has bred strange alliances, as unions and managements put aside their differences to lobby for more public money. In Illinois, Maryland, and Ohio, for instance, the nation's largest operator of private nursing homes, Trans Healthcare Inc., struck an agreement with SEIU locals not to oppose organizing efforts at its facilities if the union would help it lobby for higher Medicaid reimbursements. Together, the two groups created a separate lobbying arm, financed with a $100,000 union contribution and a company pledge to match that amount.

In New York, an alliance of Local 1199/SEIU and the Greater New York Hospital Association has used its hefty financial resources and political clout to propel the state's Medicaid budget, already the nation's biggest, to stratospheric heights. In 1999, a joint union-hospital group spent $13 million—the largest sum ever for a state lobbying campaign—on a successful effort not only to derail Governor Pataki's Medicaid reform efforts but also to press the state to pour billions from its share of the federal tobacco settlement into expanding the program. The coalition's attack ads, warning of hospital closings and other dire consequences, were so outrageous that even other hospital organizations complained about them. But no group in the state (besides taxpayers) had enough of an interest in stopping the alliance's campaign, so the ads went largely unchallenged.

Unsurprisingly, the unions and nonprofit hospitals that have flourished in the shower of government money don't want any private-sector competition. In Rhode Island, for instance, unions have joined with doctors and local hospitals to oppose the entry of for-profit hospitals into the state, arguing that nonprofits are more altruistic and more faithful to their mission than profit-making hospitals. This contention ignores the fact that nonprofit hospital executives often pocket huge salaries and that subsidized nonprofits without bottom-line motivation often become inefficient and offer overly costly care. Nonetheless,

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the coalition managed to push through one of the country's strictest hospital-takeover laws, barring for-profits from entering Rhode Island on the false grounds that they funnel money out of health care to investors. Now Rhode Island is paying the price for its unwise policy. Far from siphoning money out of health care, for-profit hospitals can use their ability to raise money in the capital markets to invest in new technologies and facilities, exactly what Rhode Island needs, since it is beset by "an aging hospital infrastructure that requires significant investment," according to a state health-care group.

Faced by the alliance between publicly funded employees and state legislators who have gerrymandered their districts to protect themselves from the wrath of voters, taxpayers don't have much of a chance. In Washington State, for instance, when voters rejected a ballot initiative last year to raise the state's sales tax to pay for smaller class sizes, the legislature went ahead and paid for it anyway, by using fiscal gimmicks to ram the state's annual spending right through the limit set by the voters more than a decade ago.

Even so, the out-of-control cost of state and local government has sparked the stirrings of what could be the next great taxpayer revolt. In states where citizens have the right to get initiatives on the ballot and vote for them in referendums, campaigns to limit the growth of government are gearing up. Ohio secretary of state Ken Blackwell is stirring up taxpayer support for a constitutional amendment to cap state spending increases. Nevada voters recently said that they favor spending restraints by a 46-to-19 percent margin, encouraging anti-tax activists to go ahead with a ballot initiative after legislators shot down a bill to restrain state spending. Taxpayer groups are also pushing tax and spending limits in Maine and Oklahoma and exploring a ballot initiative in Tennessee after lawmakers there gobbled up $272 million in surplus revenues, squandering much of it on expanding the state's Medicaid system, without providing any tax relief.

But the highest-stakes battle is in California. Though the press describes the political dynamic as the Governator vs. state Democrats, in fact the recall movement that put Schwarzenegger in office emerged from taxpayer groups, who have no illusions about who their opponents are: "It's the unions who control Sacramento now," says Jon Coupal, head of the anti-tax Howard Jarvis Association.

"The rising cost of state and local government has sparked the stirrings of what could be the next great taxpayer revolt."

Schwarzenegger is supporting several ballot initiatives: one that would limit the growth of the state budget to prevent spending surges during boom times; and another, known as paycheck protection, which seeks to limit the financial power of public unions. Paycheck protection, which voters heavily favor in early polls, would require public-sector unions to get a member's permission before spending his dues on political activities. After Colorado's governor Bill Owens instituted paycheck protection by executive order, 75 percent of workers in the Colorado Association of Public Employees withheld money for political organizing.

The battle against these taxpayer initiatives will be brutal. Opponents have already spent an estimated $20 million attacking Governor Schwarzenegger's agenda and have pledged to spend as much as $100 million. The extraordinary resources that public-sector interests can now bring to such a fight illustrate how even in places where citizens have direct access to the ballot box, reform won't be easy. Public-sector forces have spent the last 40 years gathering power and organizing effectively. The next year or so will show whether tax revolts at the local level are still possible in America and whether taxpayers can be the masters of the public servants they support.

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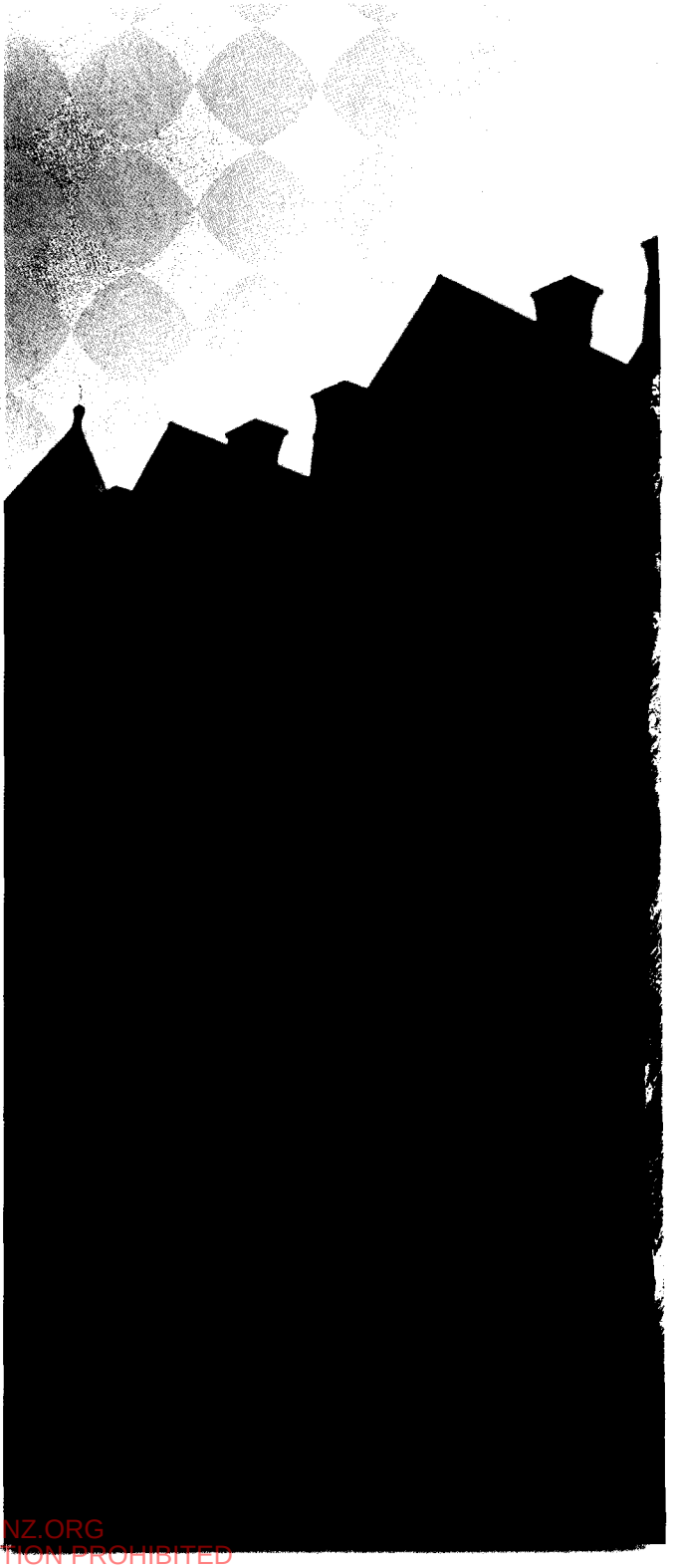
They're Taking Away Your Property for *What*?

The Court's eminent-domain ruling is useless as well as unjust.

Nicole Gelinas

Pundits both Left and Right condemned the Supreme Court's *Kelo* v. *City of New London* ruling last June as an unjust, even un-American, abuse of state power. And surely it's hard to defend a decision that lets government take well-kept property away from one private individual or business to give it to another who might make it more upscale. But what critics haven't noticed is that the decision simply expands the Court's approval of a practice that state and local governments have long used to bring about urban renewal or economic development. More important, they have also failed to notice that, over its long history, this practice has almost never worked. The Court's decision fails not just on moral but also on utilitarian grounds.

The crux of *Kelo*'s injustice is its further enlargement of the power of eminent domain granted by the Fifth Amendment, which recognizes that "private property" can "be taken for public use." "Public use" once meant the obvious: the state could seize private land to build a road, for example, or it could allow a railway or a utility company to build track or power lines across private farmland, since they'd be available to everybody. But 50 years ago the Court replaced the "public use" rationale for eminent domain with a more nebulous concept of "public purpose," in order to allow cities to condemn slums to remove urban blight. In *Kelo*, the 5-4 majority went a step further, ruling that governments don't need to show that property they condemn is even nominally blighted; the vague



THE LA GUARDIA AND WAGNER ARCHIVES, LA GUARDIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE/THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK/NYC HOUSING AUTHORITY (2)

Central planners used eminent domain to raze this splendid building . . .

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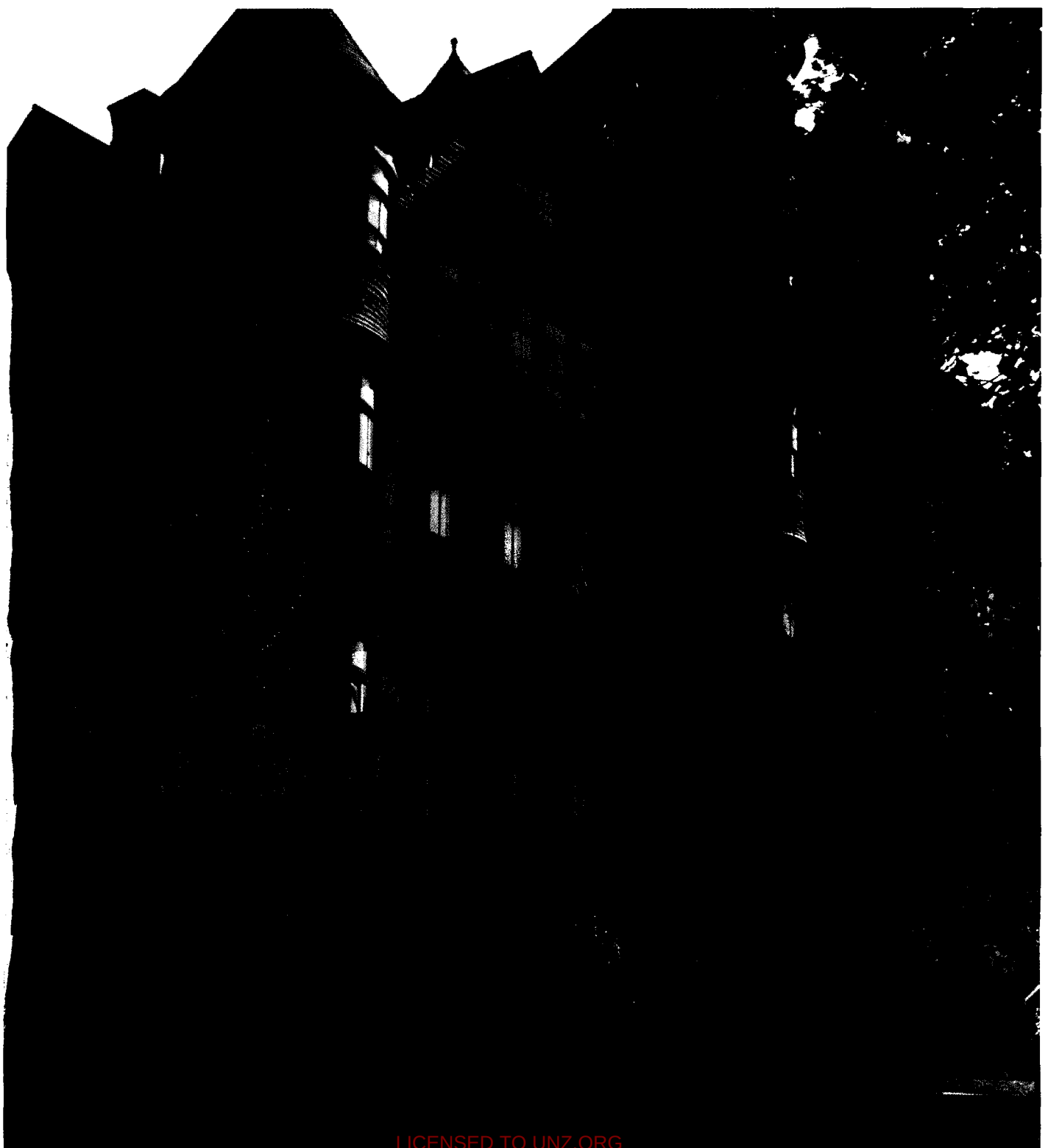

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promise of higher tax revenues and the hope of private-sector jobs through planned development are no less public goods than a road or a water-treatment plant. And so the Court allowed New London, Connecticut, to condemn a middle-class waterfront neighborhood and to parcel it out to private developers who would make more lucrative use of the property, including building luxury condos.

Americans are serious about the sanctity of private property because they understand that it is not only inseparable from liberty but also the foundation of prosperity. If Soviet-style central planning actually worked, America's vast urban renewal projects that used eminent domain to bulldoze slums would have produced flourishing communities rather than high-rise housing projects awash in social pathology. And the megaprojects of today—the stadiums, convention centers, Renaissance Centers, and so on, for which urban planners have condemned acres of private property—would actually have produced the economic development that their sponsors promised. Like so many who have believed those promises, Justice John Paul Stevens, in his majority opinion in *Kelo*, puts much stock in the fact that New London "has carefully formulated an economic development plan that it believes will provide appreciable benefits to the community." More than 50 years of experience say it won't.

Urban planners like to dream big dreams, though in the U.S. until the mid–twentieth century they mostly remained dreams. From at least the 1920s, planning orthodoxy held that the slum neighborhoods whose conditions Jacob Riis had documented as the century began were too diseased to heal themselves—they had to be eradicated wholesale, and even run-down neighborhoods should be knocked down before they turned into slums. Urban "experts" and government-sponsored developers would then plan new residential districts in concert with political leaders, with government itself providing housing for many of the poor. Of course, officials would need the right to use eminent domain freely to plan new districts; as University of Pennsylvania law prof Wendell Pritchett puts it, the experts believed that "only major changes"—that is, erosions—"in property law could prevent urban decline."

New York planners began making the dream a reality in a relatively modest way in the early 1940s, when they cleared 18 square blocks of Manhattan's East Side above 14th Street so that MetLife could build Stuyvesant Town, a high-rise suburb-within-a-city for middle-class whites whose rich cultural capital made the architecturally sterile project succeed socially. The full scale of the planners' ambitions soon emerged, however, as they pondered what to do with the unskilled minorities who were migrating north and destabilizing urban neighborhoods as the whites moved out. Their decision: raze those overcrowded neighborhoods to build "modern" housing complexes.

So in New York, as elsewhere, acres of shabby but functional neighborhoods—from the Lower East Side to Harlem in Manhattan, and all over Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx—disappeared under the bulldozer to make room for the boxes of high-rise housing projects that still sap vitality from Gotham today. As Robert Caro writes in *The Power Broker*: "The eastern edge of Manhattan Island . . . was completely altered between 1945 and 1958. Northward from the bulge of Corlears Hook looms a long line of apartment houses . . . hulking buildings, utilitarian, drab, unadorned, not block after block . . . but mile after mile."

Hundreds of millions of dollars in "modern" housing investments proved no solution, however; the housing projects instead turned economic and social assets—whole swaths of the city—into economic and social liabilities. In fact, in New York and elsewhere, the construction of housing projects only exacerbated middle-class flight to the suburbs, as people fled the fringe neighborhoods that survived these new and efficient crime factories. Instead of being uplifted by their new housing, as the planners intended, the poor became increasingly dysfunctional and dependent on the government.

Projects like these were soon under way all over urban America, and Congress gave them its blessing, and its money, in 1949, when it

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funded a massive urban-renewal program for housing, Title I, which cities would carry out using local contractors. In 1954, Congress cemented the new orthodoxy—central planning of whole neighborhoods after leveling them through eminent domain to remove "blight"—by amending the law to require that municipalities submit comprehensive community development plans in order to get urban-renewal grants. Mayors had to destroy their cities in order to save them—so they did.

The Supreme Court first ratified using eminent domain for this purpose that same year, affirming the right of the Washington, D.C., government to condemn much of the city's depressed southwest region, including a thriving, privately owned department store, and to transfer the land to a private construction company for redevelopment. The district government had argued that the area was too decayed ever to repair itself; it had to be razed, department store and all, and rebuilt all at once in order to succeed.

"Americans understand that private property is both inseparable from liberty and the foundation of prosperity."

"The area must be planned as a whole [in order to overcome its blight]," the Court ruled in *Berman* v. *Parker*. "The concept of the public welfare is broad and inclusive. . . . If those who govern the District of Columbia decide that the nation's capital should be beautiful as well as sanitary, there is nothing in the Fifth Amendment that stands in the way."

But as the cities began to lose middle-class residents and manufacturing jobs to the suburbs, and as the urban poor multiplied and became increasingly demoralized, such central-planning schemes proved no solution to what was starting to be seen as urban decline. Consider the fate of New Haven, Connecticut, the most willing victim of the urban-renewal era. Mayor Richard Lee, a Democrat who took office in 1953, had pledged to create "a slumless city, the first in the nation." During his 16-year tenure, as Yale University's "Model City" history project relates, Lee procured more urban-renewal funds per capita than any other American mayor—more than $1 billion in today's dollars, and nearly four times as much as runner-up Newark. In 1958, the *Saturday Evening Post* hailed Lee for embarking upon "saving a dead city."

New Haven officials used eminent domain to raze block after block of immigrant and working-class communities to build "Modernist" office complexes, industrial buildings, and housing projects, as well as a strip mall, a parking garage, and connections to highways. Going beyond earlier planners' ambitions, limited merely to solving housing problems, the New Haven planners would revitalize an entire economy.

But bulldozers and central planning didn't save New Haven. Between 1950 and 1980, the city's population declined by 30 percent—and poverty increased. "In 1970, as urban renewal ended, the census ranked New Haven as the 38th-poorest city in America," local journalist Paul Bass and Yale prof Douglas Rae wrote in a *New York Times* op-ed in July. "Ten years later, it was ranked seventh, with 23.2 percent of its population living below the poverty line. Today, more than a quarter of its families live in subsidized housing." Rae thinks that without urban renewal, New Haven's poverty rate would be lower today: "They destroyed a lot of economic and social vitality," he told me. Even Mayor Lee saw that top-down planning had failed; by the end of his final term, he observed: "If New Haven is a model city, God help America's cities." Unfortunately, cities all over the country had replicated New Haven's experience.

As planners recognized that they couldn't solve the problem of housing (and uplifting)

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the poor, and certainly couldn't remake entire cities, they scaled back, rather than relinquished, their ambitions. By the seventies and eighties, cities focused on using eminent domain to build sterile business districts and industrial centers to trap disappearing well-paying jobs in inner cities, or to build convention centers, stadiums, and subsidized hotels to lure free-spending out-of-towners. Eminent domain for urban renewal morphed into eminent domain for economic development—with similarly dismal results.

Detroit, for instance, spent some $200 million to destroy the "blighted" Poletown neighborhood in 1981 so that General Motors could build a factory there. But this investment never paid off. Poletown's destruction was supposed to create 6,000 jobs but created less than half that. And that's not the worst of it. "If we assume that the 600 eliminated businesses employed a modest average of slightly more than four workers, their total lost work force turns out to be greater than the 2,500 jobs created at the GM plant," wrote famed urbanist Jane Jacobs in her amicus brief supporting the *Kelo* homeowners. "Even if we consider its impact in purely economic terms, it is likely that the Poletown condemnation caused more harm to the people of Detroit than good." Moreover, Detroit's condemnation of Poletown certainly didn't stop the decline of the auto industry—or of Detroit.

In New York, politicians' efforts to trap corporate jobs through government planning resulted in a similar centrally planned boondoggle: downtown Brooklyn's Metrotech. For decades, New York pols had fretted that the city was losing its white-collar jobs to New Jersey, Connecticut, and other lower-cost regions, even as skyrocketing crime and taxes sent middle-class residents fleeing from the outer boroughs.

The solution? Nearly two decades ago, Gotham decided to build a walled camp in the middle of a lower-class area of Brooklyn to lock white-collar jobs in. This project would accomplish two goals, pols thought. In addition to keeping jobs in New York, Metrotech would spark further development in a slummy neighborhood that never had grown on its own, despite its proximity to lower Manhattan. City and state officials used eminent domain to displace 250 owners and tenants so that developer Bruce Ratner could build the suburban-style office campus.

Metrotech tenants have received about $270 million in state and city subsidies (of which more than $200 million went to JPMorgan Chase). But Metrotech hasn't "kept" the nation's financial-services jobs in New York: Gotham's share of U.S. securities-industry jobs has fallen from one in three to one in five since 1980. Metrotech, despite its Class A office space and its quiet campus lush with greenery, can't even attract enough private-sector tenants to remain fully occupied; its tenants include an array of government agencies.

Nor has Metrotech, completely cut off from the surrounding streetscape, encouraged the growth of an unsubsidized business community in its neighborhood. Metrotech is what it was when it opened: a suburban-style office campus carved out of inner-city downtown Brooklyn. The two worlds don't meet. The government's newest solution for "underdeveloped" Brooklyn is *another* top-down project by eminent domain planned by the same developer nearby. It seems that the distortion of the free market via eminent domain for economic development just begets more of the same.

True, Ratner's new proposal for remaking Brooklyn, the massive Atlantic Yards development project, glitters with modern urban-planning language, but it is a perfect illustration—only one out of many recent eminent-domain projects like it—of how little today's central planners have learned from half a century of failure. Ratner's sweeping master plan for the Prospect Heights neighborhood envisions a basketball arena over some uncovered railyards he'll buy at a below-market price from New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and he's petitioning the state and city to condemn the adjoining blocks so that he can build nearly 6,000 high-rise apartments there. Ratner's supporters, including Mayor Michael Bloomberg, dismiss the entire Brooklyn neighborhood as "the railyards" to denote a region in economic distress.

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But the properties Ratner wants the government to condemn, like the houses in *Kelo*, are hardly distressed. They include two historic warehouses converted into fancy condos and sold at high prices just two years ago, a neighborhood bar that dates to pre-Prohibition days, and a flourishing arts-supply factory that employs two dozen legal immigrants and has recently opened a modest art gallery as well. The owners and tenants on the soon-to-be-condemned properties pay their sales, income, and property taxes. They create jobs. And they do all this without government subsidy. Ratner's plans, by contrast, require huge investments of state- and city-taxpayer money.

The taxpayers sure won't get much in return. They will pour about $200 million in public subsidies into the stadium portion of Ratner's project up front. In return, the city and state could receive an annual net surplus from that part of the project of about $7.8 million over 30 years. (And that's if everything goes perfectly according to plan, and if the city and state don't have to pony up more millions up front to pay for unspecified infrastructure improvements, as is hinted at in early project documents; as Steven Malanga has reported in these pages, nearly a dozen economists have studied stadium projects across the country for decades and have found that they almost always fail to deliver their promised benefits.) But if New York simply deposited that $200 million in a savings account and left Prospect Heights alone, it could receive about $8 million a year in interest—and at no risk, as it could withdraw the $200 million at any time. For Ratner, of course, the arena provides a signal advantage; since politicians never fail to fall in love with the idea of urban stadiums, they are willing to condemn the land that Ratner needs to make his project viable and to allow him to build his apartment buildings higher and denser, and thus more profitable, than current zoning permits.

"Remember, nobody set out to create the urban-renewal failures of past decades."

Ratner knows the criticism of the failed centrally planned projects of the past, of course: that big, single-use, housing developments, no matter for low-, middle-, or high-income residents, don't create lively streetscapes with urban vitality. "Look what we have built," Jane Jacobs wrote of the 1950s version of the "model city" in her seminal 1961 classic, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. "[L]ow-income projects that become worse centers of delinquency. Middle-income housing projects which are truly marvels of dullness and regimentation, sealed against any buoyancy or vitality of city life .... Commercial centers that are lackluster imitations of standardized suburban chain-store shopping."

Today's sophisticated megaproject developers like Ratner and his supporters speak the language of Jane Jacobs. Ratner and co. talk of building a "mixed-use urban complex" of residential, commercial, and retail "space," as opposed to the failed purely residential and purely commercial districts planned by past renewers. And they've brought in one of the trendiest celebrity architects, the overrated Frank Gehry, who enthuses about building a neighborhood from scratch.

But even with a fashionable architect, one cannot decree a healthy mixed-use urban complex that will serve as the anchor of a new neighborhood and make it so. Just look at New York's sterile Roosevelt Island. Is the risk at Prospect Heights really worth the economic and social cost of bulldozing an existing "mixed-use urban complex"—that is, an actual neighborhood—that doesn't require taxpayer subsidies?

Remember, nobody set out to create the urban-renewal failures of past decades—and such projects didn't fail because politicians are inherently dumber than businessmen; many smart developers have built failed urban-renew-

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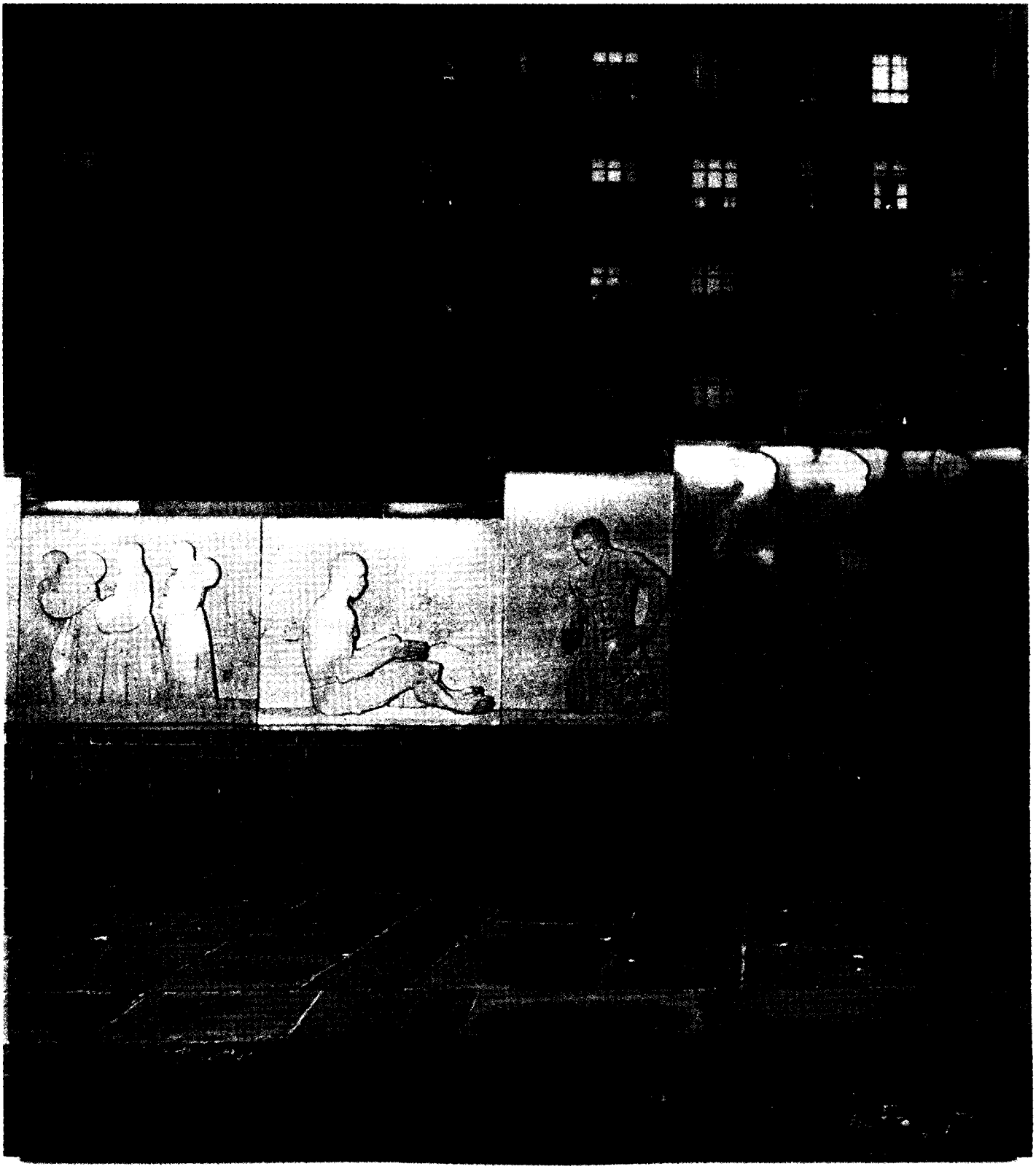

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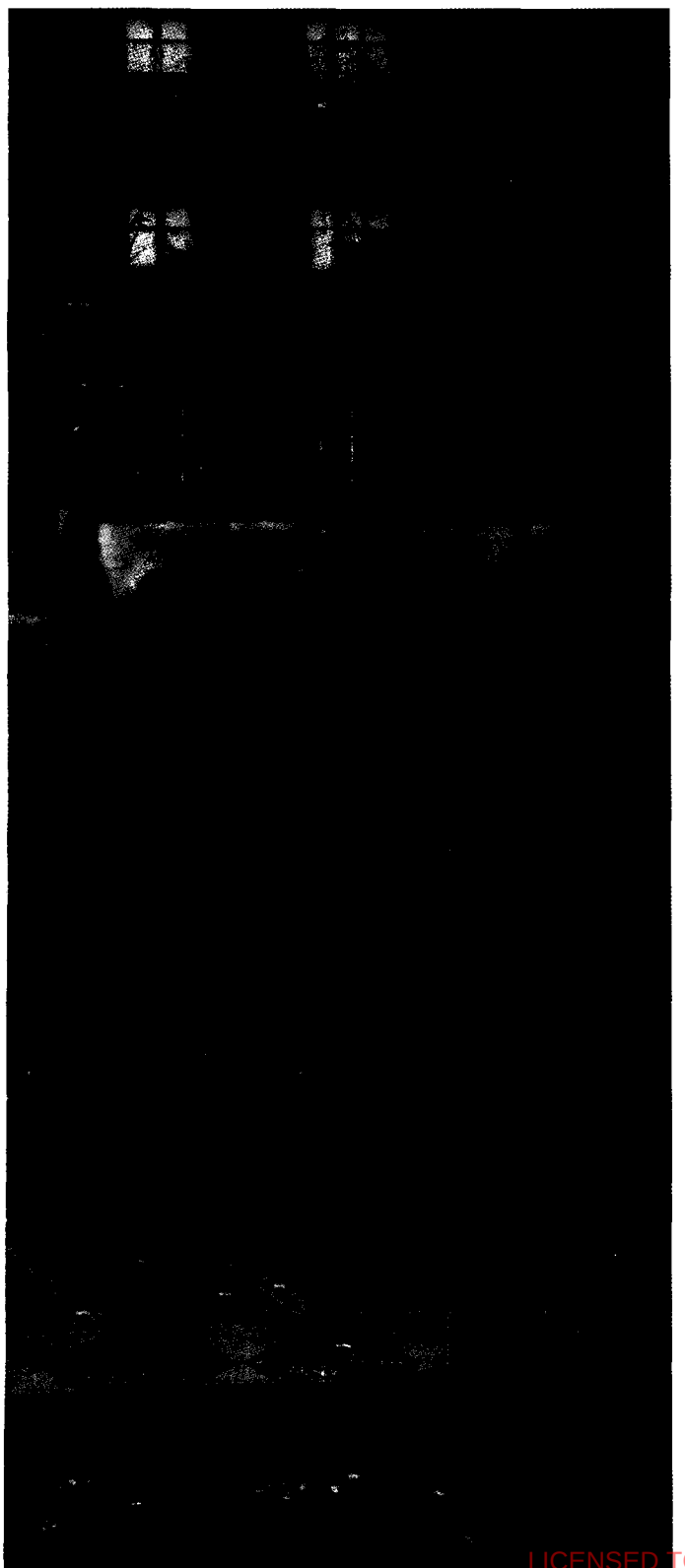

al projects. They failed because neighborhoods, and economies, are built not by government and developer fiat but through individual initiative in pursuit of profit. Jacobs wrote more than 40 years ago that neighborhoods built all at once by one developer, even those designed for affluent residents, "offer no economic possibilities to city diversity. The practical penalties of dullness . . . stamp the neighborhood early. . . . The neighborhood shows a strange inability to update itself . . . by a new generation. It is dead. Actually, it was dead from birth."

"They say they're not doing what they did 30 years ago," John Norquist, the former mayor of Milwaukee, remarks of today's urban planners. "But they're taking out the urban fabric of neighborhoods. Sometimes you get it right, but it's not likely. If the person isn't brilliant, you end up with Ceauçescu's Bucharest. It's much better to go with multiple-owner development over a long period of time."

Just consider the difference between Boston's North End and its West End, says Norquist. Modest immigrant communities before the 1950s, both appeared slums to planners. Boston used urban-renewal funds and eminent domain to develop the West End as a self-contained modern high-rise apartment district, but it left alone parts of the North End. Despite the Central Artery highway that bisects it, the North End is now a vibrant mixed-income community of old and new construction, where people want to live, work, and visit. The West End, while benefiting from the heated real-estate market, is stagnant and boring by comparison. "The West End has some value, but nowhere near the value of the North End," Norquist concludes. Similarly, in New York, the old slums of Hell's Kitchen and the Upper West Side, relatively untouched by urban renewal, now house an economically diverse collection of small firms, restaurants, and apartment dwellers, while on the Lower East Side, the dead weight of the central planners' housing projects serves as a thick boundary to natural residential and commercial growth in nearby neighborhoods that were once America's worst tenement slums and now bustle with hip and trendy vitality.

. . . to build this bleak housing project in Brooklyn.

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Like these former slum areas, Ratner's Prospect Heights prize *used* to be distressed—longtime neighborhood residents remember the days of drugs and hookers all too well. But wedged in between three prosperous areas of Brooklyn, including Park Slope, it has benefited from natural growth over the past decade, like Hell's Kitchen and the Upper West Side before it. (That's part of the reason Ratner wants it—he isn't asking the government to use eminent domain to help him put luxury apartment towers among the projects of East New York to bring "economic development" to that stagnant, centrally planned community.) Without government intervention, prosperous people have chosen to move in, and one Prospect Heights property owner, Henry Weinstein, had tentative plans to develop his land to its full potential, including, possibly, more luxury condos. In order to win the bid for the state-owned railyards, Ratner also had to stymie rival developer Gary Barnett's competing bid to build apartment towers over the railyards' footprint, which did not require eminent domain and massive stadium subsidies. So taxpayers will end up subsidizing economic growth that would have happened naturally, and far more rationally, anyway.

There's another danger here. In the free market, a poorly designed project will fail and be replaced by a well-designed project—or just won't find private financing to get built. With government central planning, ill designed projects last forever—and they retard natural growth around them. Take Mayor Bloomberg's recently scuttled plan to subsidize a football stadium on Manhattan's West Side. Like Ratner in Prospect Heights, Bloomberg pitched the deal as a necessary stimulant for a long-dormant neighborhood. In truth, developers have been moving midtown Manhattan steadily westward for two decades, beginning with the Worldwide Plaza office and condo tower on Eighth Avenue in the early 1980s and now extending westward and southward with new apartment towers along Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Avenues throughout the West 40s and 50s. A stadium would only serve as a wall against the continuance of that natural growth. We can see the effects of 1950s-style urban renewal—the housing projects still stand. It's harder to see missed opportunities.

But pols and planners insist that they can't simply watch decayed neighborhoods (real and perceived) fester while they wait for the possibility that economic growth, and tax revenues, will develop on their own. That's why the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors filed briefs supporting New London in *Kelo*. After the case was decided, D.C. mayor Anthony Williams, the head of the NLC, breathed a sigh of relief: "Local officials [need] the continued use of eminent domain to bolster depressed neighborhoods," he said. Eminent domain "has been indispensable for revitalizing local economies, creating much-needed jobs and generating revenue that enables cities to provide essential resources. . . . [W]e need all the help we can get to redevelop our neighborhood and provide jobs for our citizens."

One of the most oft-cited examples in support of this argument is the revitalization of Times Square. Without government's power to condemn the blighted blocks at Manhattan's heart, the story goes, New York would never have been able to bring tourists back to the Crossroads of the World.

This is nonsense, as William J. Stern, who headed New York State's Urban Development Corporation when it cooked up the 42nd Street Development Plan, has written in these pages ("The Unexpected Lessons of Times Square's Comeback," Autumn 1999). Times Square reemerged in the 1990s as a corporate and tourist mecca thanks to the skillful and aggressive policing that began in the mid-1980s and became pervasive under Mayor Rudy Giuliani, and thanks also to tax benefits for selected developers, in a city where overall tax cuts seemed politically too hard to accomplish.

Sure, the state government chose developers to build new office towers to anchor the new Times Square. But nothing happened. As government-sponsored developers dithered for years and didn't build, private activity filled the vacuum. In the early nineties, Stern recounts, Viacom, Bertelsmann, and Morgan Stanley moved in on their

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own. The boom was on—because Times Square was safe again.

The state's $300 million worth of eminent-domain condemnations, mostly along 42nd Street, did have one important effect: they drove Times Square's critical mass of sex shops, and the lowlifes they attracted, out of the heart of the square. But Stern argues that government could have achieved the same effect through effective, and aggressive, zoning. "You don't have a sex shop in Times Square for the same reason you don't have a pig farm," Stern told me. "The sleaze business poisons other businesses." Tourists don't want to visit streets teeming with pimps, prostitutes, and perverts.

It's not just Times Square that has prospered from more than a decade of outstanding police work and falling crime in New York. Harlem, too, has revitalized; newly safe streets there have unlocked millions of dollars of value along the rows of brownstones that were spared the housing-project wrecking ball 50 years ago. In light of the resurgence of so many once-blighted neighborhoods after crime was cut down, it's hard not to wonder if unsubsidized residential and commercial investment from Brooklyn Heights and lower Manhattan might not eventually have spilled into an unbulldozed downtown Brooklyn as the city repaired itself, too—without a subsidized Metrotech.

If megaprojects built through eminent domain fail over and over, why do state and city governments continue to take private property away from rightful owners for taxpayer-subsidized stadiums, convention centers, and office parks that, in the best-case scenarios, will only suck economic activity away from other sectors, not generate new economic activity? The truth is, eminent domain is a gold mine for the political racket—the pols and interest groups

Eminently Silly in D.C.

In an example of the frivolity of the abuse of eminent domain to transfer private property from one profit-maker to another, Washington mayor Anthony Williams has proposed to condemn the Skyland Shopping Center, a perfectly decent mall that serves a working-class, mostly black neighborhood in southeast Washington, in order to allow a politically favored developer to build . . . another perfectly decent mall. Luckily, Skyland also is an example of how this frivolity can be stopped effectively.

Williams's plan would displace several high-quality anchor tenants as well as black-owned small businesses to pave the way for a big-box store, preferably a Target. Why? Despite the fact that the existing mall is profitable and safe, and hasn't had a lease vacancy in years, supporters of redevelopment don't believe that the current mall is upscale enough to serve an up-and-coming neighborhood.

This government intervention, like so many, is almost certainly just plain unnecessary. If southeast D.C. is indeed gentrifying, and if enough middle-class residents in the area replace, or evolve from, working-class residents, Target or one of its competitors will be champing at the bit soon enough to open up a store to serve them.

But that hasn't happened yet—probably because the neighborhood isn't quite gentrified enough yet to support such growth. So Williams wants to jump ahead of the market, doing with an extraordinary government power exactly what private money would have accomplished on its own.

But Skyland does, at least, demonstrate why Congress must pass a proposed bill that would prohibit the awarding of federal grants to local projects that are predicated on the use of eminent domain for economic development. D.C. has applied for a $19 million community-development loan guarantee from HUD to remake Skyland—and at press time, it looks as though the federal government views the application skeptically, at best.

If courts won't rein in runaway governments, cutting those governments' funding looks to be an effective substitute.

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who benefit when private assets are forced into the public sphere for political redistribution.

Politicians line up behind megaprojects like Ratner's Prospect Heights scheme because they can boast that their sponsorship will create jobs and economic growth, whereas no politician can take credit for gradual and organic free-market economic development. The big, politically connected, unionized construction companies love such projects, too, because subsidized construction mandates unionized contractors, and the politically active construction unions love them no less. The Wall Street firms that underwrite the bonds for the public subsidy are also big supporters, as are the industry associations whose members stand to gain, even while other taxpaying businesses stand to lose.

Such highly politicized enterprises require finely honed political skills, and Ratner honed his as a commissioner in former New York City mayor Ed Koch's administration. For backup, he has hired a former assistant to the project district's state assemblyman to work on "community relations." Ratner himself gave a revealing glimpse into how the system often works, in former New York mayoral candidate Mark Green's book on campaign finance reform. "When you do business with the city, you get solicited by everyone from U.S. Senators down to members of the City Council," he told Green. "You knew your competitors were doing it, and so when someone would call, it was hard to say no. For businesses that do a lot of business with the city, it was expected. . . . I didn't want to be a person on the outs, nor could my business afford to be a person on the outs given how much business we do with government." So when Ratner announced in 1997 that he would contribute no longer, he recounts, "[P]eople said I was crazy: 'You're going to get yourself killed.'"

In fact, Ratner had only found an even smarter way to play the political game. His new Prospect Heights project comes complete with a 51-page "Community Benefits Agreement," which could serve as a textbook for politicized economic development. In it, he offers sweeteners to "community" activists, among them at least 2,000 units of below-market "affordable" housing and a generous percentage of jobs for minority contractors and employees.

The sweeteners attracted some powerful, if unsavory, political support. Unsurprisingly, Al Sharpton climbed on board, leading a march around Brooklyn in support of Ratner's master plan and winning political credit, because he can claim that he helped push Ratner to lavish those benefits on minority contractors and employees.

But, more crucially, Ratner's chief "community" cheerleader is Bertha Lewis, head of the New York chapter of Acorn, the nation's biggest left-wing activist group. Acorn has perfected the art of turning community activism to its own profit, as evidenced above all in its manipulation of the federal Community Reinvestment Act, which requires banks to show that they've lent sufficiently in poor neighborhoods if they want government approval of prospective mergers. Since complaints from "community" organizations are a sign of possible noncompliance with the act, banks had ample incentive during the era of industry consolidation through mergers to keep such organizations happy by paying them fees to market their loans in poor communities. Acorn has mastered this game, receiving $760 million from the Bank of New York to distribute as loans to low-income homebuyers, and receiving hundreds of thousands of dollars in "donations" from J. P. Morgan and Chase when the two banks sought to merge in 2000.

Ratner's ransom payment to Acorn isn't so direct, but it's the same principle; he must provide "community benefits," brokered by Acorn, in order to get "community" approval for his plan. Acorn's Lewis, as "enforcing member" (the literal term the agreement uses) of the plan's affordable-housing component, will have a huge say in deciding who will get the project's subsidized apartments—a rich patronage plum indeed. Lewis thus has a big voice in shaping the long-term voting pattern of Ratner's brand-new community. In return, Acorn will take "reasonable steps to publicly support the project by . . . appearing with the developer before the public parties, community organizations and the media as part of a coordinated effort to realize and advance the project."

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This is no trivial matter, since Lewis is not only a "community" leader but also co-head of the powerful Working Families Party, the political face of Gotham's public-sector unions. Some 30 members of New York's 51-member city council won election with Lewis's endorsement; it would be hard for Ratner to find more a powerful political ally, even if he made the head of the Democratic Party his "enforcer."

Ratner's benefits are attracting newcomers to New York's political follies, such as James Caldwell, a small-change Brooklyn activist who now heads a new coalition called Brooklyn United for Innovative Local Development (Build). Caldwell started Build just two months after Ratner announced his Prospect Heights project—but despite its total lack of a track record, Build will help execute the Community Benefits Agreement. Earlier this year Caldwell told a public meeting: "If this thing doesn't come out in favor of Ratner, it would be a conspiracy against blacks." Build's small-business director, Michael West, added: "When you reject the Ratner project . . . you're saying you don't care about the 55 percent unemployment rate in the black community."

"Ratner's chief 'community' cheerleader heads New York's chapter of Acorn, the U.S.'s biggest leftist group."

Build has filed documents with the IRS that show that Caldwell and his partners in the group expect to get nearly *all* of their funding, which they estimate at $5 million over the next two years, from . . . Bruce Ratner. Of that money, Caldwell expects to draw a $125,000 salary for himself and six-figure salaries for two partners. (For his part, Ratner claims that his company will indeed pay for some of the community programs Build plans to execute under the benefits agreement, but that he has not agreed to a specific amount.) As Jane Jacobs wrote in her *Kelo* brief: "Economic takings serve as a virtual license for exploitation of the eminent-domain power on behalf of powerful interest groups"—including pols, developers, and "community" beneficiaries.

Kelo has generated a backlash. Even Justice Stevens said in an August speech that he would oppose the use of eminent domain if he were a state or local legislator. "My own view is that the free play of market forces is more likely to produce acceptable results in the long run than the best-intentioned plans of public officials," he said.

In response, more than half of the states, and hundreds of cities and towns, have introduced legislation to rein in eminent domain. The governors of Alabama and Texas have already signed such legislation. Even in seizure-prone New York, bills are pending: New York City councilwoman Letitia James (of the Working Families Party, yes, but also of the Prospect Heights neighborhood that Ratner would bulldoze) has introduced a bill to outlaw using city funds for *Kelo*-style eminent domain, and state assemblyman Richard Brodsky has introduced a bill to require closer review of condemnations and to increase the mandated payments to displaced property owners and renters. Congress has several bills pending; one in the House would prohibit federal assistance to a state for economic development if that state did not expressly outlaw *Kelo*-type economic development.

Though these efforts have attracted supporters across the political spectrum, from the NAACP and the AARP on the left to the Claremont, Rutherford, and Goldwater Institutes on the right, such unanimity doesn't guarantee success. The political class is likely to view those who care about property rights and sound economic principles in the same way it increasingly views individual property owners and the free market: as stubborn, or stupid, obstacles in the way of "economic development"—and in the way, of course, of political profit.

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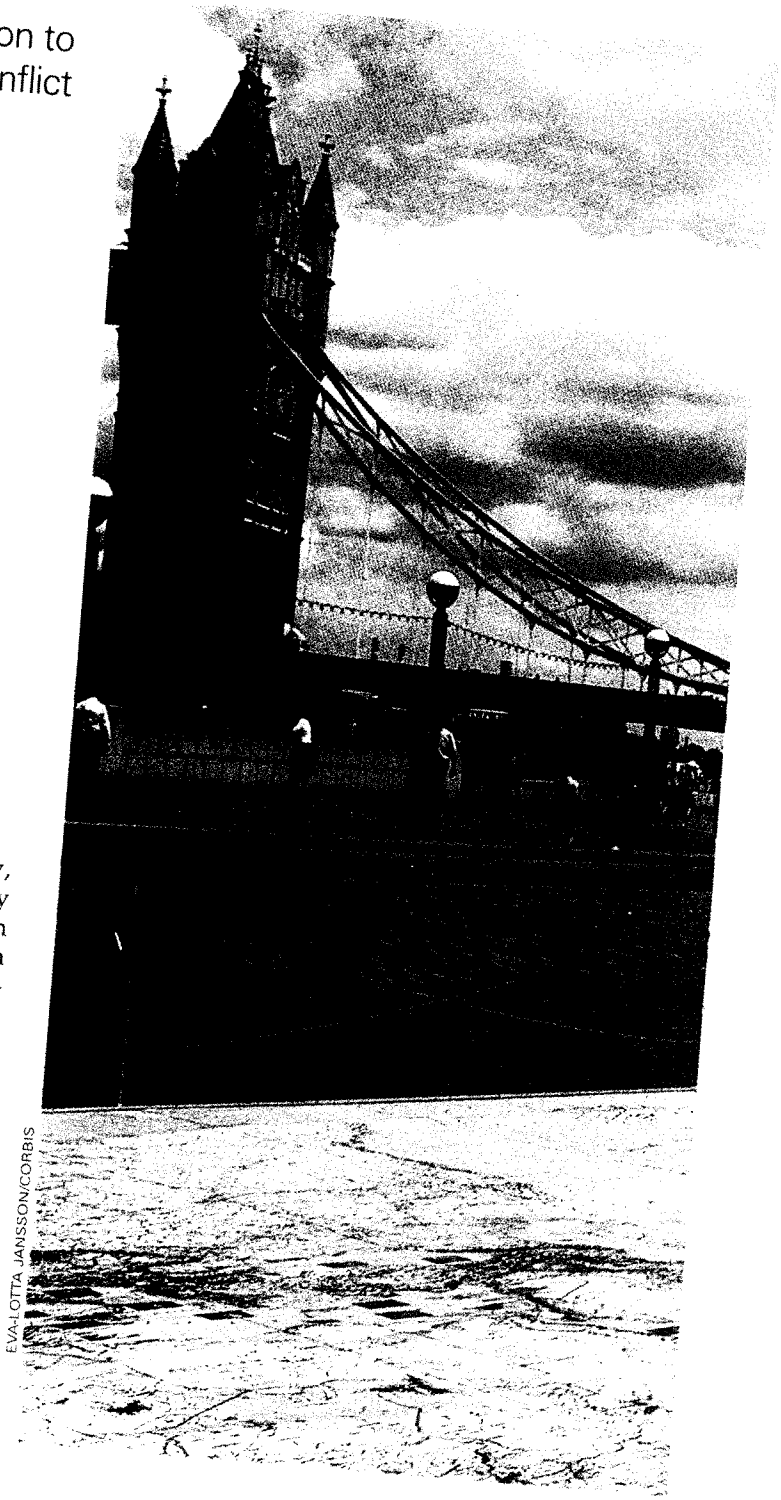
The Suicide Bombers Among Us

The 7/7 solution to an insoluble conflict



EVA-LOTTA JANSSON/CORBIS

Theodore Dalrymple

All terrorists, presumably, know the dangers that they run, accepting them as an occupational hazard; given Man's psychological make-up—or at least the psychological makeup of certain young men—these dangers may act as an attraction, not a deterrent. But only a few terrorists use their own deaths as an integral means of terrorizing others. They seem to be a breed apart, with whom the rest of humanity can have little or nothing in common.

Certainly they sow panic more effectively than other terrorists. Those who leave bombs in public places and then depart, despicable as they are, presumably still have attachments to their

For many young British Muslim males, keeping their women in traditional subjection, . . .

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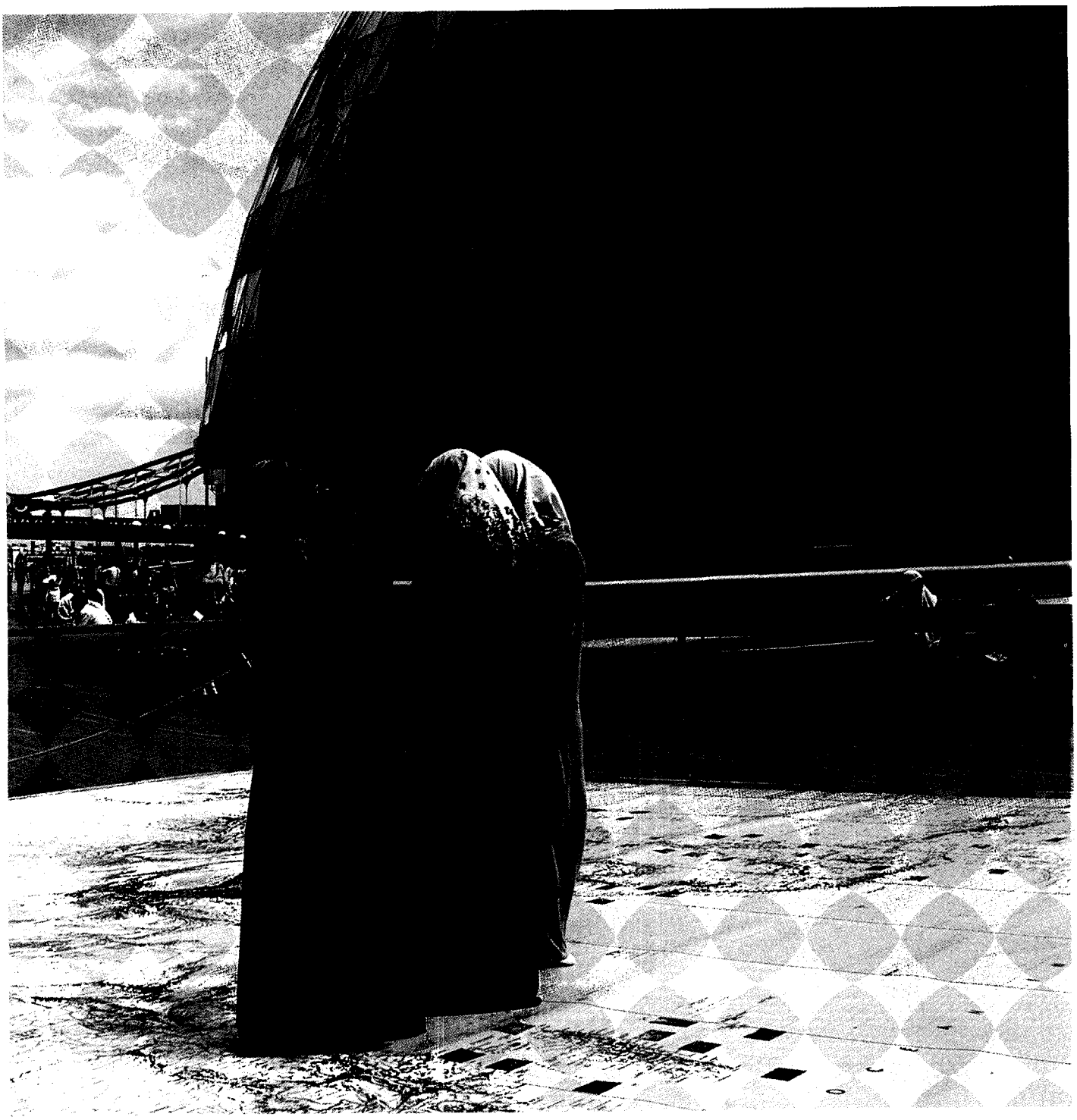

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own lives, and therefore may be open to dissuasion or negotiation. By contrast, no threat (at first sight) might deter someone who is prepared to extinguish himself to advance his cause, and who considers such self-annihilation while killing as many strangers as possible a duty, an honor, and a merit that will win ample rewards in the hereafter. And Britain has suddenly been forced to acknowledge that it has an unknown number of such people in its midst, some of them homegrown.

The mere contemplation of a suicide bomber's state of mind is deeply unsettling, even without considering its practical consequences. I have met a would-be suicide bomber who had not yet had the chance to put his thanatological daydream into practice. What could possibly have produced as embittered a mentality as his—what experience of life, what thoughts, what doctrines? What fathomless depths of self-pity led him to the conclusion that only by killing himself and others could he give a noble and transcendent meaning to his existence?

As is by now well known (for the last few years have made us more attentive to Islamic concepts and ways of thinking, irrespective of their intrinsic worth), the term "jihad" has two meanings: inner struggle and holy war. While the political meaning connotes violence, though with such supposed justifications as the defense of Islam and the spread of the faith among the heathen, the personal meaning generally suggests something peaceful and inward-looking. The struggle this kind of jihad entails is spiritual; it is the effort to overcome the internal obstacles—above all, forbidden desires—that prevent the good Muslim from achieving complete submission to God's will. Commentators have tended to see this type of jihad as harmless or even as beneficial—a kind of self-improvement that leads to decency, respectability, good behavior, and material success.

In Britain, however, these two forms of jihad have coalesced in a most murderous fashion. Those who died in the London bombings were sacrificial victims to the need of four young men to resolve a conflict deep within themselves (and within many young Muslims), and they imagined they could do so only by the most extreme possible interpretation of their ancestral religion.

Young Muslim men in Britain—as in France and elsewhere in the West—have a problem of personal, cultural, and national identity. They are deeply secularized, with little religious faith, even if most will admit to a belief in God. Their interest in Islam is slight. They do not pray or keep Ramadan (except if it brings them some practical advantage, such as the postponement of a court appearance). Their tastes are for the most part those of non-Muslim lower-class young men. They dress indistinguishably from their white and black contemporaries, and affect the same hairstyles and mannerisms, including the vulpine lope of the slums. Gold chains, the heavier the better, and gold front teeth, without dental justification, are symbols of their success in the streets, which is to say of illicit enrichment.

Many young Muslims, unlike the sons of Hindus and Sikhs who immigrated into Britain at the same time as their parents, take drugs, including heroin. They drink, indulge in casual sex, and make nightclubs the focus of their lives. Work and careers are at best a painful necessity, a slow and inferior means of obtaining the money for their distractions.

But if in many respects their tastes and behavior are indistinguishable from those of underclass white males, there are nevertheless clear and important differences. Most obviously, whatever the similarity between them and their white counterparts in their taste for sex, drugs, and rock and roll, they nevertheless do not mix with young white men, even in the neighborhoods devoted to the satisfaction of their tastes. They are in parallel with the whites, rather than intersecting with them.

Another obvious difference is the absence of young Muslim women from the resorts of mass distraction. However similar young Muslim

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men might be in their tastes to young white men, they would be horrified, and indeed turn extremely violent, if their sisters comported themselves as young white women do. They satisfy their sexual needs with prostitutes and those whom they quite openly call "white sluts." (Many a young white female patient of mine has described being taunted in this fashion as she walked through a street inhabited by Muslims.) And, of course, they do not have to suffer much sexual frustration in an environment where people decide on sexual liaisons within seconds of acquaintance.

However secular the tastes of the young Muslim men, they strongly wish to maintain the male dominance they have inherited from their parents. A sister who has the temerity to choose a boyfriend for herself, or who even expresses a desire for an independent social life, is likely to suffer a beating, followed by surveillance of Stasi-like thoroughness. The young men instinctively understand that their inherited system of male domination—which provides them, by means of forced marriage, with sexual gratification at home while simultaneously freeing them from domestic chores and allowing them to live completely Westernized lives outside the home, including further sexual adventures into which their wives cannot inquire—is strong but brittle, rather as communism was: it is an all or nothing phenomenon, and every breach must meet swift punishment.

Even if for no other reason, then (and there are in fact other reasons), young Muslim males have a strong motive for maintaining an identity apart. And since people rarely like to admit low motives for their behavior, such as the wish to maintain a self-gratifying dominance, these young Muslims need a more elevated justification for their conduct toward women. They find it, of course, in a residual Islam: not the Islam of onerous duties, rituals, and prohibitions, which interferes so insistently in day-to-day life, but in an Islam of residual feeling, which allows them a sense of moral superiority to everything around them, including women, without in any way cramping their style.

This Islam contains little that is theological, spiritual, or even religious, but it nevertheless exists in the mental economy as what anatomists call a "potential space." A potential space occurs where two tissues or organs are separated by smooth membranes that are normally close together, but that can be separated by an accumulation of fluid such as pus if infection or inflammation occurs. And, of course, such inflammation readily occurs in the minds of young men who easily believe themselves to be ill-used, and who have been raised on the thin gruel of popular Western culture without an awareness that any other kind of Western culture exists.

"Young Muslim men in Britain—as in France and elsewhere in the West—are deeply secularized, with little religious faith."

The dissatisfactions of young Muslim men in Britain are manifold. Most will experience at some time slighting or downright insulting remarks about them or their group—the word "Paki" is a term of disdainful abuse—and these experiences tend to grow in severity and significance with constant rehearsal in the mind as it seeks an external explanation for its woes. Minor tribulations thus swell into major injustices, which in turn explain the evident failure of Muslims to rise in their adopted land. The French-Iranian researcher Farhad Khosrokhavar, who interviewed 15 French Muslim prisoners convicted of planning terrorist acts, relates in his book, *Suicide Bombers: Allah's New Martyrs*, how some of his interviewees had been converted to the terrorist outlook by a single insulting remark—for example, when one of their sisters was called a "dirty Arab" when she explained how she couldn't leave home on her own as other girls could. Such is

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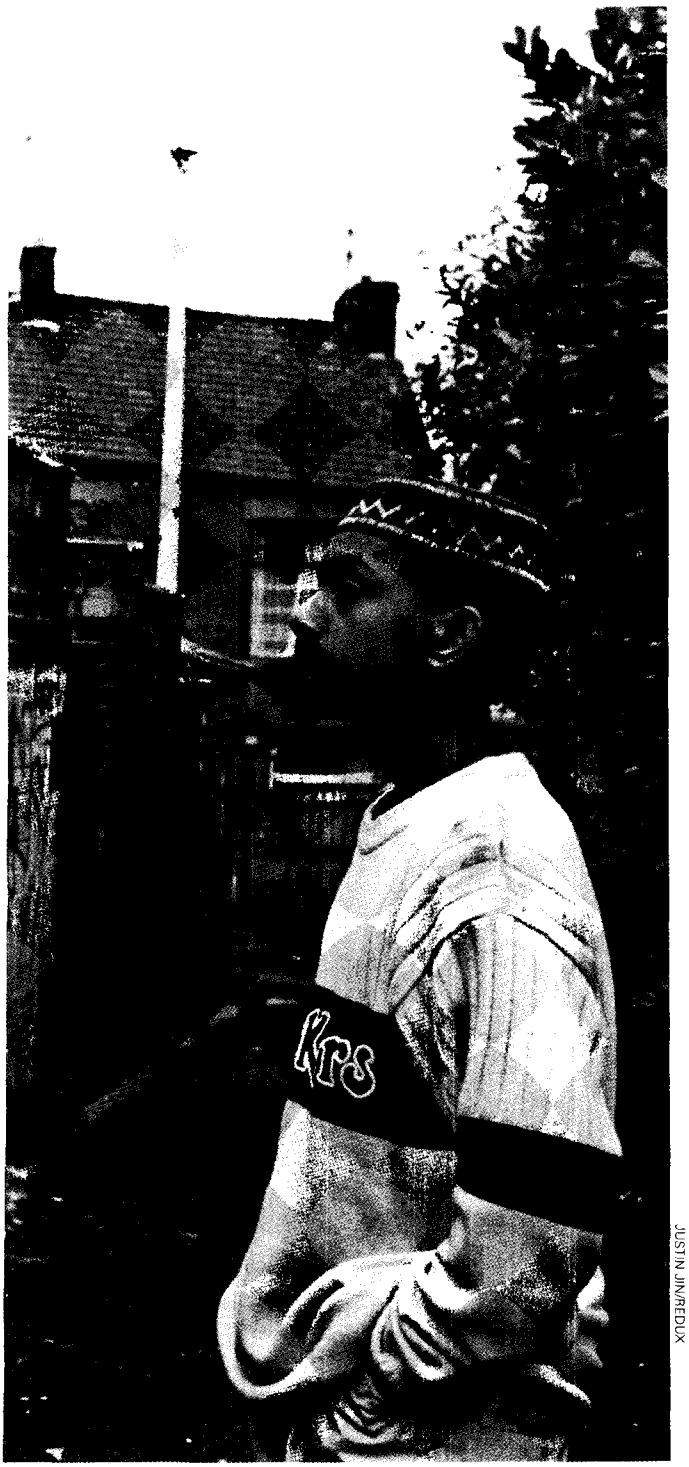

JUSTIN JIN/REDUX

. . . while they pursue Western-style sex, drugs, and rock and roll, is the heart of their Islamic identity.

the fragility of the modern ego—not of Muslims alone, but of countless people brought up in our modern culture of ineffable self-importance, in which an insult is understood not as an inevitable human annoyance, but as a wound that outweighs all the rest of one's experience.

The evidence of Muslims' own eyes and of their own lives, as well as that of statistics, is quite clear: Muslim immigrants and their descendants are more likely to be poor, to live in overcrowded conditions, to be unemployed, to have low levels of educational achievement, and above all to be imprisoned, than other South Asian immigrants and their descendants. The refusal to educate females to their full capacity is a terrible handicap in a society in which, perhaps regrettably, prosperity requires two household incomes. The idea that one is already in possession of the final revealed truth, leading to an inherently superior way of life, inhibits adaptation to a technically more advanced society. Even so, some British Muslims do succeed (the father of one of the London bombers owned two shops, two houses, and drove a new Mercedes)—a fact which their compatriots interpret exactly backward: not that Muslims can succeed, but that generally they can't, because British society is inimical to Muslims.

In coming to this conclusion, young Muslims would only be adopting the logic that has driven Western social policy for so long: that any difference in economic and social outcome between groups is the result of social injustice and adverse discrimination. The premises of multiculturalism don't even permit asking whether reasons internal to the groups themselves might account for differences in outcomes.

The BBC peddles this sociological view consistently. In 1997, for example, it stated that Muslims "continue to face discrimination," as witness the fact that they were three times as

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likely to be unemployed long-term as West Indians; and this has been its line ever since. If more Muslims than any other group possess no educational qualifications whatsoever, even though the hurdles for winning such qualifications have constantly fallen, it can only be because of discrimination—though a quarter of all medical students in Britain are now of Indian subcontinental descent. It can have nothing whatever to do with the widespread—and illegal—practice of refusing to allow girls to continue at school, which the press scarcely ever mentions, and which the educational authorities rarely if ever investigate. If youth unemployment among Muslims is two and a half times the rate among whites, it can be only because of discrimination—though youth unemployment among Hindus is actually lower than among whites (and this even though many young Hindus complain of being mistaken for Muslims). And so on and so on.

A constant and almost unchallenged emphasis on "social justice," the negation of which is, of course, "discrimination," can breed only festering embitterment. Where the definition of justice is entitlement by virtue of group existence rather than reward for individual effort, a radical overhaul of society will appear necessary to achieve such justice. Islamism in Britain is thus not the product of Islam alone: it is the product of the meeting of Islam with a now deeply entrenched native mode of thinking about social problems.

And it is here that the "potential space" of Islamism, with its ready-made diagnosis and prescriptions, opens up and fills with the pus of implacable hatred for many in search of a reason for and a solution to their discontents. According to Islamism, the West can never meet the demands of justice, because it is decadent, materialistic, individualistic, heathen, and democratic rather than theocratic. Only a return to the principles and practices of seventh-century Arabia will resolve all personal and political problems at the same time. This notion is fundamentally no more (and no less) bizarre or stupid than the Marxist notion that captivated so many Western intellectuals throughout the 20th century: that the abolition of private property would lead to final and lasting harmony among men. Both conceptions offer a formula that, rigidly followed, would resolve all human problems.

Of course, the Islamic formula holds no attraction for young women in the West. A recent survey for the French interior ministry found that 83 percent of Muslim converts and reconverts (that is, secularized Muslims who adopted Salafism) in France were men; and from my clinical experience I would bet that the 17 percent of converts who were women converted in the course of a love affair rather than on account of what Edward Gibbon, in another context, called "the evident truth of the doctrine itself."

The West is a formidable enemy, however, difficult to defeat, for it exists not only in the cities, the infrastructure, and the institutions of Europe and America but in the hearts and minds even of those who oppose it and wish to destroy it. The London bombers were as much products of the West as of Islam; their tastes and their desires were largely Westernized. The bombers dressed no differently from other young men from the slums; and in every culture, appearance is part, at least, of identity. In British inner cities in particular, what you wear is nine-tenths of what you are.

But the Western identity goes far deeper. One of the bombers was a young man of West Indian descent, whose half-sister (in his milieu, full siblings are almost unknown) reports that he was a "normal" boy, impassioned by rap music until the age of 15, when he converted to Islam. It need hardly be pointed out that rap music—full of inchoate rage, hatred, and intemperance—does not instill a balanced or subtle understanding of the world in its listeners. It fills and empties the mind at the same time: fills it with debased notions and empties it of critical faculties. The qualities of mind and character that are attracted to it, and that consider it an art form worthy of time and attention, are not so easily overcome or replaced.

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Jermaine Lindsay was only 19, four years into his conversion from rap to Islam, when he died—an age at which impulsivity is generally at its greatest, requiring the kind of struggle for self-mastery that rap music is dedicated to undermining. Islam would have taught him to hate and despise what he had been, but he must have been aware that he still was what he had been. To a hatred of the world, his conversion added a self-hatred.

The other bombers had passions for soccer, cricket, and pop music. They gave no indication before their dreadful deeds of religious fanaticism, and their journeys to Pakistan, in retrospect indications of a growing indoctrination by fundamentalism, could have seemed at the time merely family visits. In the meantime, they led highly Westernized lives, availing themselves of all the products of Western ingenuity to which Muslims have contributed nothing for centuries. It is, in fact, literally impossible for modern Muslims to expunge the West from their lives: it enters the fabric of their existence at every turn. Usama bin Ladin himself is utterly dependent upon the West for his weaponry, his communications, his travel, and his funds. He speaks of the West's having stolen Arabian oil, but of what use would oil have been to the Arabs if it had remained under their sands, as it would have done without the intervention of the West? Without the West, what fortune would bin Ladin's family have made from what construction in Saudi Arabia?

Muslims who reject the West are therefore engaged in a losing and impossible inner jihad, or struggle, to expunge everything that is not Muslim from their breasts. It can't be done: for their technological and scientific dependence is necessarily also a cultural one. You can't believe in a return to seventh-century Arabia as being all-sufficient for human requirements, and at the same time drive around in a brand-new red Mercedes, as one of the London bombers did shortly before his murderous suicide. An awareness of the contradiction must gnaw in even the dullest fundamentalist brain.

Furthermore, fundamentalists must be sufficiently self-aware to know that they will never be willing to forgo the appurtenances of Western life: the taste for them is too deeply implanted in their souls, too deeply a part of what they are as human beings, ever to be eradicated. It is possible to reject isolated aspects of modernity but not modernity itself. Whether they like it or not, Muslim fundamentalists are modern men—modern men trying, impossibly, to be something else.

"You can't believe in a return to seventh-century Arabia and at the same time drive around in a brand-new Mercedes."

They therefore have at least a nagging intimation that their chosen utopia is not really a utopia at all: that deep within themselves there exists something that makes it unachievable and even undesirable. How to persuade themselves and others that their lack of faith, their vacillation, is really the strongest possible faith? What more convincing evidence of faith could there be than to die for its sake? How can a person be really attached or attracted to rap music and cricket and Mercedes cars if he is prepared to blow himself up as a means of destroying the society that produces them? Death will be the end of the illicit attachment that he cannot entirely eliminate from his heart.

The two forms of jihad, the inner and the outer, the greater and the lesser, thus coalesce in one apocalyptic action. By means of suicide bombing, the bombers overcome moral impurities and religious doubts within themselves and, supposedly, strike an external blow for the propagation of the faith.

Of course, hatred is the underlying emotion. A man in prison who told me that he wanted to be a suicide bomber was more hate-filled than

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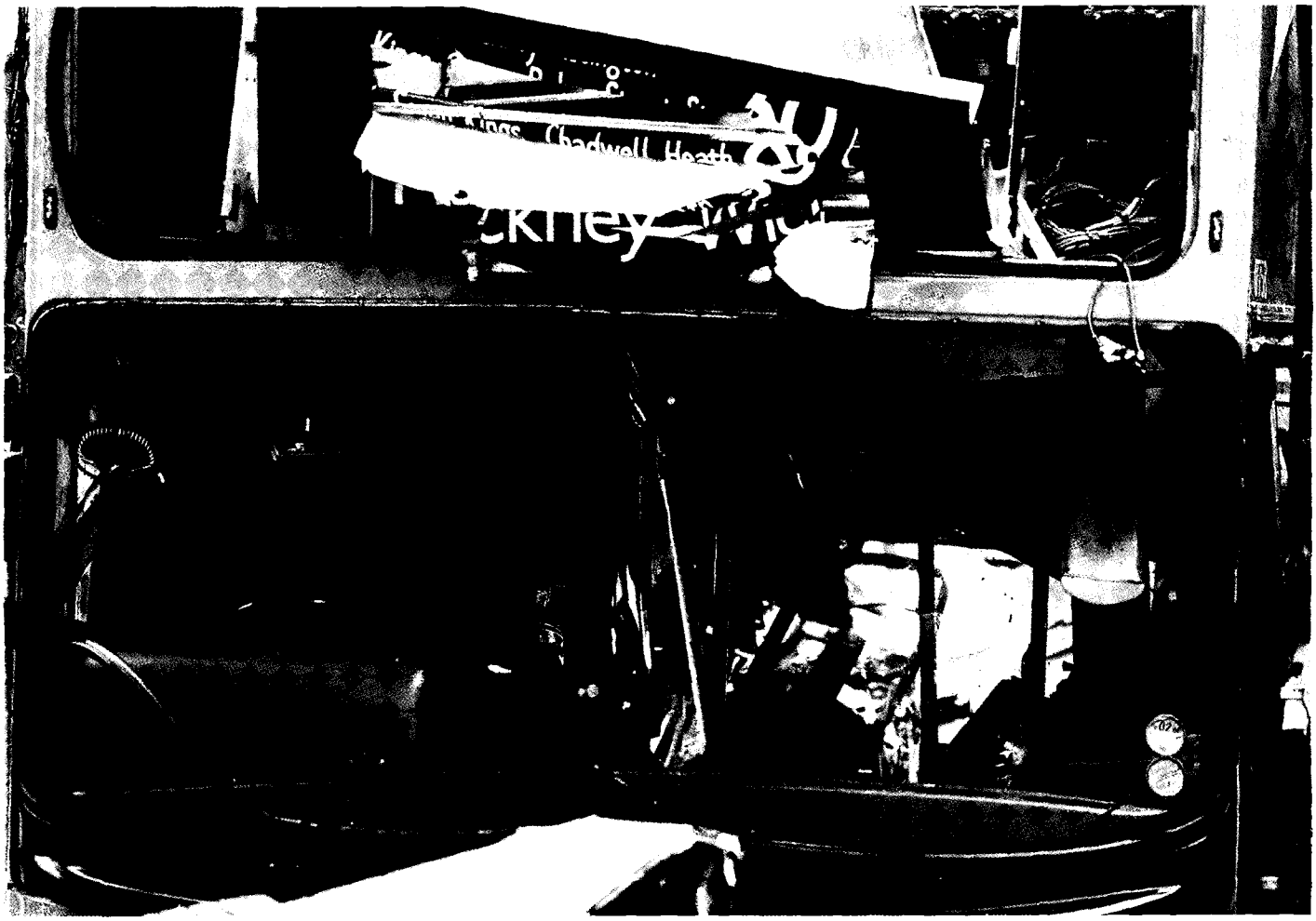

For suicide terrorists, like those who blew up this London bus on July 7, the conflicts between their Western and Muslim identities are intolerable.

any man I have ever met. The offspring of a broken marriage between a Muslim man and a female convert, he had followed the trajectory of many young men in his area: sex and drugs and rock and roll, untainted by anything resembling higher culture. Violent and aggressive by nature, intolerant of the slightest frustration to his will and frequently suicidal, he had experienced taunting during his childhood because of his mixed parentage. After a vicious rape for which he went to prison, he converted to a Salafist form of Islam and became convinced that any system of justice that could take the word of a mere woman over his own was irredeemably corrupt.

I noticed one day that his mood had greatly improved; he was communicative and almost jovial, which he had never been before. I asked him what had changed in his life for the better.

He had made his decision, he said. Everything was resolved. He was not going to kill himself in an isolated way, as he had previously intended. Suicide was a mortal sin, according to the tenets of the Islamic faith. No, when he got out of prison he would not kill himself; he would make himself a martyr, and be rewarded

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eternally, by making himself into a bomb and taking as many enemies with him as he could.

Enemies, I asked; what enemies? How could he know that the people he killed at random would be enemies?

They were enemies, he said, because they lived happily in our rotten and unjust society. Therefore, by definition, they were enemies—enemies in the objective sense, as Stalin might have put it—and hence were legitimate targets.

I asked him whether he thought that, in order to deter him from his course of action, it would be right for the state to threaten to kill his mother and his brothers and sisters—and to carry out this threat if he carried out his, in order to deter others like him.

The idea appalled him, not because it was yet another example of the wickedness of a Western democratic state, but because he could not conceive of such a state acting in this unprincipled way. In other words, he assumed a high degree of moral restraint on the part of the very organism that he wanted to attack and destroy.

"Surveys suggest that between 6 and 13 percent of British Muslims are sympathetic toward Islamic terrorists."

PETER MACDIARMID/POOL/EPA/SIPA

Of course, one of the objects of the bombers, instinctive rather than articulated, might be to undermine this very restraint, both of the state and of the population itself, in order to reveal to the majority of Muslims the true evil nature of the society in which they live, and force them into the camp of the extremists. If so, there is some hope of success: physical attacks on Muslims (or on Hindus and Sikhs ignorantly taken to be Muslims) increased in Britain by six times in the immediate aftermath of the bombings, according to the police. It wouldn't take many more such bombings, perhaps, to provoke real and serious intercommunal violence on the Indian subcontinental model. Britain teems with aggressive, violent subgroups who would be only too delighted to make pogroms a reality.

Even if there is no such dire an eventuality, the outlook is sufficiently grim and without obvious solution. A highly secularized Muslim population whose men nevertheless wish to maintain their dominance over women and need a justification for doing so; the hurtful experience of disdain or rejection from the surrounding society; the bitter disappointment of a frustrated materialism and a seemingly perpetual inferior status in the economic hierarchy; the extreme insufficiency and unattractiveness of modern popular culture that is without value; the readiness to hand of an ideological and religious solution that is flattering to self-esteem and allegedly all-sufficient, and yet in unavoidable conflict with a large element of each individual's identity; an oscillation between feelings of inferiority and superiority, between humiliation about that which is Western and that which is non-Western in the self; and the grotesque inflation of the importance of personal existential problems that is typical of modern individualism—all ensure fertile ground for the recruitment of further "martyrs" for years to come.

Surveys suggest that between 6 and 13 percent of British Muslims—that is, between 98,000 and 208,000 people—are sympathetic toward Islamic terrorists and their efforts. Theoretical sympathy expressed in a survey is not the same thing as active support or a wish to emulate the "martyrs" in person, of course. But it is nevertheless a sufficient proportion and absolute number of sympathizers to make suspicion and hostility toward Muslims by the rest of society not entirely irrational, though such suspicion and hostility could easily increase support for extremism. This is the tightrope that the British state and population will now have to walk for the foreseeable future; and the sweet dream of universal cultural compatibility has been replaced, in a single day, by the nightmare of permanent conflict.

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If the Problem Is Muslim Terror, Then What?

We need to get serious about keeping our enemies out.

Victor Davis Hanson

In September, federal prosecutors charged illegal alien Mahmoud Maawad, 29, with wire fraud and fraudulent use of a Social Security number. But their real worry was that the Egyptian student had just ordered $3,000 in aviation materials, including DVDs entitled "Ups and Downs of Takeoffs and Landings," "Mental Math for Pilots," and "Mastering GPS Flying." Shortly after this July's London bombings, U.S. antiterrorism authorities arrested five Egyptian men—four of them illegal immigrants—in a Newark, New Jersey, apartment, which contained maps of the New York City subway system, train schedules, videos of city landmarks, and $8,000 in twenties and fifties. A few weeks earlier, in the sleepy town of Lodi, California, about two hours north of where I live, the FBI arrested Umer and Hamid Hayat (father and son) on immigration charges and for lying to federal agents about ties with Islamic terrorist groups in Pakistan. Officials allege that Hamid visited an al-Qaida camp in Pakistan during 2003 and 2004 for training in weapons, explosives, and hand-to-hand combat. Last autumn, authorities broke up a terrorist cell in Portland, Oregon, charging four with plotting to set up a terrorist training organization and with traveling to Afghanistan to aid al-Qaida and the Taliban.

Western observers have struggled to understand Muslim culture, . . .

GIULIO CARLINI, "IN DEFENCE OF HONOUR," THE ART ARCHIVE/MUSEO CIVICO TRIESTE/DAGLI ORTI

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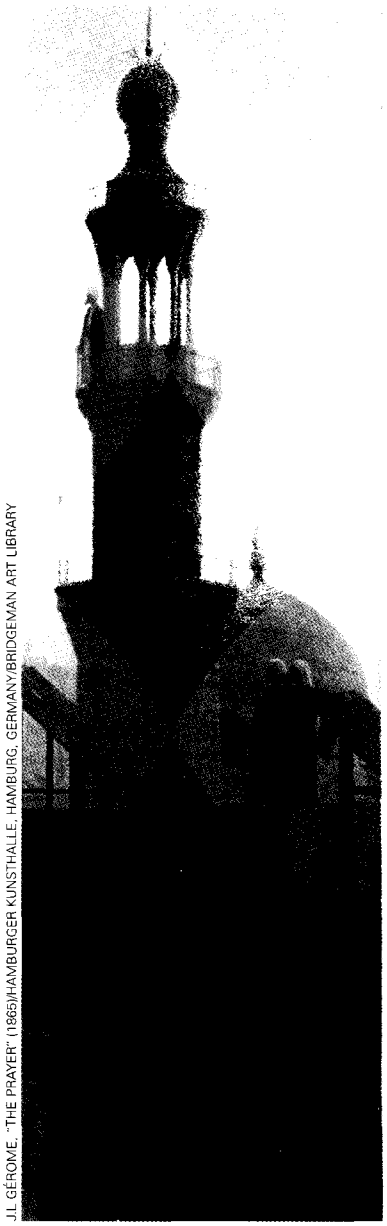
Since September 11, the list of those arrested, and in a growing number of cases convicted, for Islamist terrorist activities in the U.S. has gotten longer and longer. Some arrestees have been U.S. citizens; more have been aliens, legal and illegal, living in out-of-the-way places on work or study visas. The list includes such abettors of evil as Mukhtar al-Bakri of Lackawanna, New York (ten years for providing support to al-Qaida), Mohammed Mohsen Yahya Zayed of Brooklyn (45 years for providing support to al-Qaida and Hamas), and Ibrahim Admed Al-Hamdi of northern Virginia (15 years for firearm violations in connection with terrorist activities). The continued presence within our borders of so many who seek to destroy us suggests that we still haven't squarely faced the problem that Islamic radicalism poses to our domestic security.

In fact, sometimes we have seemed to encourage actively the spread of such radicalism on our shores. On Halloween night 2001—just weeks after September 11 and with U.S. troops fighting in Afghanistan—firebrand imams Abdul Alim Musa, Muhammad Asi, Abdel Razzag Al Raggad, and other Islamic radicals broadcast live from the National Press Club on C-SPAN2 a bold proclamation of empathy for the Taliban, hatred for Jews, and understanding for the murderers of 3,000 Americans. Asi, for example, spoke of the "grand strike against New York and Washington" and the "twin evils in this world . . . the decision makers in Washington and the decision makers in Tel Aviv." Not only did we allow such a broadcast to tens of thousands—our government subsidized it.

Or consider the ease with which the now-deported Muhammed Adil Khan, a radical Islamic cleric associated with the two Lodi suspects, first arrived in America in the eighties, welcomed on a "religious worker" visa. Another Lodi extremist, Shabbir Ahmed, entered more recently on such a visa—despite having led demonstrations in Pakistan shortly after September 11 that called for jihad against America. At his immigration hearing, Ahmed successfully pleaded that his past anti-American agitation "was a requirement of all imams. If you don't [agitate], people turn against you. They sort of force you to say something."

That America has given Islamists such freedom has doubtless made it easier for them to seduce U.S. citizens to join jihadist groups and seek to kill their countrymen. We remember most vividly John Walker Lindh, who ventured from Marin County to fight with the Taliban in Afghanistan. But even more sinister was former Chicago gang-banger José Padilla, who in 1991 converted to Islam, changed his name to Abdullah al-Muhajir, and went off to Egypt. By 2002, he had made his way to Afghanistan and Pakistan to fight at al-Qaida's side. In early May 2002, just after his return from Pakistan, officials arrested him in Chicago for allegedly plotting to explode a dirty bomb in Washington, D.C. In these cases, we have yet to discover who the spiritual mentors of these home-grown jihadists were, or where in the U.S. they were indoctrinated.



J.L. GÉRÔME, "THE PRAYER" (1865)/HAMBURGER KUNSTHALLE, HAMBURG, GERMANY/BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

The Islamist seduction also includes disturbed souls here in the U.S. who belong to no formal terrorist group but who emulate jihadists after exposure to their ideas. Such was the suicidal 15-year-old who in January 2002 crashed a light

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. . . from the rigor of its religious demands . . .

plane into a Florida bank, leaving behind a note praising bin Ladin: "First of all, Osama bin Laden is absolutely justified in the terror he has caused on 9/11. He has brought a mighty nation to its knees. God bless him and the others who helped make September 11th happen." Another example may be green-card-holding Eshem Mohamed Hadayet, the Egyptian gunman who three years ago shot up the El Al counter at Los Angeles International Airport, killing two innocents and wounding three. Jihadist literature certainly influenced beltway sniper John Allen Muhammad.

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HENRI REGNAULT, "EXECUTION WITHOUT TRIAL" (1870)/RÉUNION DES MUSÉES NATIONAUX/ART RESOURCE

Some say, reassuringly, that Islamic extremism has little appeal to America's growing Muslim population. America prides itself on being unlike Europe in its powers of assimilation. Thanks to the melting pot and a vigorous economy, this argument goes, we have no Marseilles-like Muslim ghettos or Rotterdam-style "dish cities," blighted Islamic suburbs where assimilation remains rare and terrorist sympathies widespread even after generations of living in the West. We certainly don't have the difficulties in assimilating Muslims that England experiences. A chilling *Daily Telegraph* poll, for example, found that one in four British Muslims sympathized with the motives of July's subway killers, about one in five voiced little loyalty toward Britain, and a third felt that Western culture was "decadent" and that they should help "to bring it to an end."

Yet U.S. self-congratulation is premature. Before we condemn Britain as hopelessly retrograde, we need to recognize that we have no idea how much some American Muslims support jihadist causes—comprehensive polls don't exist. Of the few surveys taken, the results aren't encouraging. The Hamilton College Muslim America poll of April 2003 revealed that 44 percent of U.S. Muslims had no opinion on whether Usama bin Ladin was involved with the September 11 attacks. Only one out of three blamed al-Qaida.

Top U.S. Muslim organizations and spokesmen are no more reassuring when it comes to condemning Islamic terror. True, the Council on American Islamic Relations finally took out a national advertisement this summer repudiating terrorism in the name of Islam—four years after September 11.

. . . to the severity of its justice . . .

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But examine the immediate reaction to the ad from *San Antonio Express-News* columnist Mansour El-Kikhia. "It is a rejection of U.S. and British policies in the Middle East, not Islam, that has promoted terrorism against America," El-Kikhia writes. "More important, it was the British and the United States that drew first blood. The Middle East didn't come to America or go to America or go to Britain; rather, America and Britain went to the Middle East." El-Kikhia ends his rant by implying that the United States has a history of warring on imaginary threats, so American Muslims should feel no imperative to distinguish themselves from those terrorizing in Islam's name.

More coherent—but, in its way, even more frightening—was "Time to Talk to al Qaeda," a *Boston Globe* op-ed by Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou of Harvard's Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research. Mohamedou assures us that bin Ladin is a reasonable adversary with whom we can reach accommodation. "Al Qaeda is an industrious, committed, and power-wielding organization waging a political, limited, and evasive war of attrition—not a religious, open-ended, apocalyptic one," he explains. "Over the past year, it has struck private and public alliances, offered truces, affected elections, and gained an international stature beyond a mere security threat." Few Americans would want us to agree to terms with terrorists who murdered 3,000 people in New York and who behead and blow up democratic reformers in Iraq and across the Middle East. Yet that's exactly what Mohamedou recommends. "Al Qaeda has been true to its word in announcing and implementing its strategy for over a decade," he observes. "It is likely to be true to its word in the future and cease hostilities against the United States, and indeed bring an end to the war it declared in 1996 and in 1998, in return for some degree of satisfaction regarding its grievances"—the U.S. out of Iraq and the rest of the Middle East, Israel out of the West Bank, and no more support for Arab dictators.

"A 2003 poll revealed that 44 percent of U.S. Muslims had no opinion on whether Usama bin Ladin was involved with 9/11."

If we really are in a war against Muslim terror, our enemies and those who support or appease them pose a quandary on the home front unlike anything we have faced in past struggles.

First, unlike in previous wars, securing the homeland is absolutely central to the outcome of this conflict. In the war's overseas fronts in Afghanistan and Iraq, no enemy possesses the conventional or other means to defeat the U.S. militarily. The only way America could lose abroad would be if it loses the will to fight—and that could only happen through a succession of terrorist attacks at home that petrified the citizenry, warped our political institutions, or disrupted the economy to such an extent that, Madrid-style, we granted concessions to radical Islamists. Terrorism is not the last desperate resort of this enemy; it is its first, deliberate attack. Domestic security becomes an even more essential concern because of the difficulties of deterring states that may have provided either money or sanctuary to Islamic terrorists in the past—an Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, or Syria—but that deny culpability and deplore terrorism publicly, making it almost impossible for us to justify a conventional military response against them.

Second, technology has made it easier for small numbers of individuals—even a single person—to inflict substantial damage on America's social and economic fabric. While the amount of explosives that terrorists needed in the past to do substantial harm was completely unwieldy, these days a single dirty bomb strapped to a terrorist's body could shut down the New York Stock Exchange for months, because of radioactive contamination. A few bags of anthrax emptied into

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the Washington subway could wreak enormous social and economic havoc.

Third, in an age of instantaneous communications and global travel, two oceans provide America with precious little security against such weapons. Back in June 1942, submarines had to drop eight German saboteurs, outfitted with clumsy radio communications equipment, off the Florida and Long Island coasts. Today, hundreds of jihadists from a Pakistan or a Yemen could fly to Lodi or Portland in less than 24 hours and communicate in real time with whomever they wish worldwide. Past experience proves that they might be involved with radical agitation back home, enter the U.S. under religious exemptions, and overstay their visas with little scrutiny.

Heightening our vulnerability further, contemporary Americans do not appear as a distinct class, ethnic group, or race. A Middle Easterner casing a subway might stand out in racially homogeneous Sweden or Nigeria; he wouldn't be so easy to pick out in the multiracial U.S. And given the casualness of American fashion, a Wall Street banker running in Central Park in a jogging suit and sneakers might look identical to a suicide-vest-wearing Pakistani terrorist rushing to a subway station.

Without prior intelligence and infiltration of Islamist mosques and madrassas, it thus becomes very difficult to ensure our safety at the last line of defense: security checks at the crowded intersection, the mall, or the train station. Add politically correct bans on even rudimentary profiling (sex and age) and we wind up only burdening commuters and shoppers with such checks without any real gain in overall safety. The key, then, must be to keep suspects out rather than relying on tracking them down or preventing them from striking once they have blended into the general population.

From a national security standpoint, the prevention of another September 11 thus seems straightforward—in theory. Suspend most legal immigration from Middle Eastern countries known to subsidize or tolerate terrorism. Review all current visas and search out and deport violators. Continue to audit carefully the arrivals of Middle Eastern nationals. Tighten the Canadian and Mexican borders. Extend existing statutes on inflammatory speech and hate crimes to include radical Islamic doctrines that routinely denigrate Americans, Jews, homosexuals, and women. Hand down long sentences to those convicted of promulgating Islamic hatred and plotting terrorism, with special attention given to Saudi-sponsored charities, madrassas, and mosques. Renew the Patriot Act, and create a public culture that associates radical Islamicism with fascism.

European and American experiences both suggest that we can toughen our domestic security without violating constitutional custom. In Europe's case, the examples are quite recent. The Netherlands is now handing down life sentences for Islamic killers, criminalizing the hate speech of the madrassas, curbing immigration from the Middle East, and deporting suspected Islamists—in some cases, Islamists with Dutch passports. France has gone even further. A radical new antiterrorism package unveiled by Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy has given the government the right to deport residents summarily and to strip radicals of their naturalized French citizenship. British prime minister Tony Blair in turn has introduced legislation that would criminalize association with radical Islamists and enable the government to deport suspected terrorist sympathizers swiftly. "Let no one be in any doubt that the rules of the game are changing," Blair warned.

Here in the U.S., there's no need to go back for guidance on securing the homeland to Abraham Lincoln's regrettable suspension of habeas corpus, Woodrow Wilson's questionable Sedition and Espionage acts that jailed hundreds during World War I for saying and writing things (even loosely) that officials felt helped the Central Powers, or Franklin Roosevelt's military tribunals that tried, convicted, and executed German terrorist agents before they committed any damage. Instead, we should reexamine the cold war, when the threat of mutually assured destruction made conventional war between the

. . . to its warlike spirit.

THEODORE CHASSERIAU "ALI BEN HAMED" (1846)/THE GRANGER COLLECTION

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Soviet Union and the Western democracies unlikely. The struggle against the Soviets and their minions thus became one of dirty operations, espionage, and terrorism.

In response to the communist threat, we blocked easy immigration from Soviet bloc countries. We did not demonize the citizens of Albania and Bulgaria, but we did not let them in, either. The United States generally tolerated membership in the Communist Party and expression of anti-American sentiments here at home, but we infiltrated hard-core Soviet-funded communist groups and jailed or deported their most dangerous operatives.

By analogy, just as no Czech citizens could easily fly to the U.S. from Prague in 1955, so should we be wary of travelers from Cairo or Riyadh. Critics will counter that Warsaw Pact governments were officially hostile to the U.S., while "allied" Egyptian, Pakistani, and Saudi authorities clamp down on terrorists. But this claim is dubious. Radical Islamists have thrived by following long-understood protocols of engagement: they do not attack the autocracies of the Middle East directly, and in return they receive from those autocracies virtual amnesty for targeting Westerners. When the Islamists break the rules and hit enclaves of foreigners inside Egypt or Saudi Arabia, the autocracies hound them for a bit. When they return to killing people on foreign soil, these dictatorships and monarchies again leave them in peace.

Four years after September 11, with the nature of our dilemma clearly before us, why do we still have terrorists operating freely in our midst? Why do we seem paralyzed over the proper course of action to prevent attacks from within?

Part of the problem is the legacy of our domestic history during wartime. Because most Americans view the U.S. internment of the Japanese during World War II as gratuitously punitive, unnecessary, and illegal, any proposal to monitor particular American subgroups today calls down swift denunciation as the moral equivalent of that internment. Moreover, though the McCarthy period was not, properly speaking, a witch hunt—no witches haunted Salem, but plenty of communists sympathetic to the Soviet Union moved in and out of the U.S. government during the fifties—it matters little. The abuses by anti-communist watchdogs have become enshrined in our collective memory as something we must never repeat. It is now a staple of our history books that the House Un-American Activities Committee was almost more pernicious than 7,000 Soviet nuclear missiles pointed at the U.S. Consequently, we have since believed it better to err on the side of civil liberties than on the side of national security, should the two conflict—at least until September 11.

Our elite commitment to multiculturalism also hamstrings us from taking the needed security steps. For 30 years, our schools have pounded home the creed that all cultures are of equal merit—or, more accurately perhaps, that no culture is worse than the West's. Millions of Americans consequently aren't sure whether radical Islam is just another legitimate alternative to the dominant Western narrative. Typical of this mind-set, UCLA English professor Saree Makdisi, excusing the London subway terrorism, wrote in the *Los Angeles Times* that deliberately butchering commuters is no worse than accidentally killing civilians while targeting terrorists in a war zone. "American and British media have devoted hours to wondering what would drive a seemingly normal young Muslim to destroy himself and others," Makdisi said. "No one has paused to ask what would cause a seemingly normal young Christian or Jew to strap himself into a warplane and drop bombs on a village, knowing full well his bombs will inevitably kill civilians (and, of course, soldiers)."

It is a tremendous historical irony that America's liberal Left, embracing moral equivalence in this fashion, has all but refused to denounce the illiberal ideology of our enemies—an ideology that supports polygamy, gender apartheid, religious intolerance, hatred of homosexuals, and patriarchy. Sometimes, the terrorists even win outright praise: perhaps the most popular filmmaker of election year 2004 was Michael Moore, who celebrated the suicide bombers and terrorists of Iraq as "minutemen" akin to our own Founding Fathers.

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If we are not sure as a nation that Islamists really are foes of Western values but instead see them as another persecuted group with legitimate gripes against us (occupied Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan, Abu Ghraib, Guantánamo Bay, colonialism, the Crusades), then it becomes increasingly hard to identify, let alone fight, the practitioners of Islamic fanaticism at home. Even the military bureaucracy seems to be having trouble naming the enemy: witness the rebranding by some Pentagon officials of "the war on terrorism" into the "global war against violent extremism." While the original nomenclature was unsatisfactory—wars aren't fought against a tactic but rather against those using it—the new name is even less helpful. Our fight against jihadists is different from our struggle with recalcitrant Serbian nationalists or Kim Jong-il's crackpot extremism. We are at war with radical Islam, Islamic fascism, Islamism—the "radical Islamic polemic," in the words of Sarkozy. We should never lose sight of this fact. President Bush's October speech describing our struggle against *Islamic* terror—a first for the administration—is an encouraging, if belated, sign.

"Immigration control—as the Dutch have learned—may be the most powerful tool in the war against the jihadists."

Practical considerations also get in the way of securing the homeland. Any radical change in our immigration laws—affecting entry into the U.S., systematic deportation of illegal aliens, or scrutiny of visa holders—requires comprehensive reform. And such transformation immediately raises the question of what to do with the 10 to 15 million illegal Mexican aliens residing here and with our vast, unsecured southern border. So far, sensitivity to Hispanic concerns, both here and in Mexico, coupled with employer lobbying, has precluded securing the border and insisting on legality for all new immigrants. Deporting illegal aliens from the Middle East will immediately lead to questions as to why we are not deporting millions of unlawful Mexican residents—a political hot potato.

Yet immigration control—as the Dutch and French have learned—may be the most powerful tool in the war against the jihadists. Not only does it help keep terrorists out, it also carries symbolic weight. In the Middle East, America is worshipped even as it is hated—constantly slurred even as it proves the Number One destination for thousands upon thousands of would-be immigrants from the Islamic world. Once we have deported the Islamists, and Middle Easterners and other Muslims find it much harder to enter the U.S. because of their governments' tolerance for radical anti-Americanism, the message will resound all the more loudly in the Muslim world itself that terrorism is intolerable.

Such toughness opposes the current orthodoxy, which holds that curtailing immigration from the Arab and Muslim world will cost us a key opportunity to inculcate moderates and eventually send back emissaries of goodwill. Maybe; but so far, the profile of the Islamic terrorist is someone who has paid back our magnanimity with deadly contempt. Just as bin Ladin, Dr. Zawahiri, and the Pakistanis suspected of bombing the London subways were not poor, uneducated, or unfamiliar with the West, so too we find that those arrested for terrorist activities on our shores seem to hate us all the more because of our liberality.

Perhaps if the message does begin to be heard that America is as unpredictable as it is merciless toward the advocates and supporters of radical Islam, then the much praised but rarely heard moderates of the Muslim world will at last step forward and keep the few from ruining things for the many. Meantime, we should stop allowing illiberals into the United States—illiberals who either wish to undermine Western tolerance or won't worry too much when others in their midst try.

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rbanities

Conservatives in Hollywood?!

Brian C. Anderson

It was hard to parody Hollywood's loony limousine liberalism this summer. "I'm coming out," trumpeted actress Jane Fonda about her plans for an anti-Iraq-war bus tour (thankfully later canceled). "I have not taken a stand on any war since Vietnam"—if "stand" is the right word for her 1972 lovefest with the enemy. Paramount announced that conspiracy-minded director Oliver Stone, who described the 9/11 terrorists' "revolt" as a legitimate "fuck you, fuck your order" to culture-controlling American movie corporations (of all things), will helm Tinseltown's first large-scale drama about the attacks. David Koepp, co-writer of Steven Spielberg's remake of *War of the Worlds*, likened the movie's ravaging aliens to the U.S. military in Iraq. And on the *Huffington Post* website, such celebrity lefties as Rob Reiner and Laurie David huffed daily about President Bush's outrages against civil liberties, Mother Earth, and all that's proper.

But guess what: ever more Americans are shunning Hollywood's wares—and disgust with Left Coast politics, both on and off screen, clearly plays a part. In a time of declining moviegoing, what gets people out to the theaters, it turns out, are conservative movies—conservative not so much politically but culturally and morally, focusing on the battle between good and evil, the worth of heroism and self-sacrifice, the indispensability of family values and martial honor, and the existence of Truth. Hollywood used to turn out a steady supply of such movies—watch just about any film from its Golden Age of the thirties and forties—and it still makes them once in a while (sometimes thanks to off-screen lefties like Steven Spielberg). We may soon see a lot more of them.

There's no question Hollywood is reeling. Film attendance is down a wrenching 12 percent from last year, and a May *USA Today*/CNN/Gallup poll found that nearly half of American adults go to movies less often than they did in 2000. Some pundits have blamed the rising price of tickets, but in constant dollars a ticket costs less than it did 25 years ago. Others believe that it's all those DVDs that people are buying—except that DVD sales are slumping, too. The most likely explanation is the left-wing politics. "You can date the recent box-office decline from the end of the summer last year, with the intensification of the presidential campaign," notes conservative film critic and talk-radio host Michael Medved. "It wasn't just Hollywood's hostility toward President Bush; it was the naked, raw partisanship."

If even one in ten Bush voters boycotted Hollywood after hearing the latest Tim Robbins anti-Bush diatribe or seeing yet another big-screen conservative villain (like the Dick Cheney look-alike who nearly destroyed the world in last year's *The Day After Tomorrow*), it would add up to 6 million fewer viewers, Medved points out. "This is what many people in the movie industry don't get: when you express hostility to conservatives, many Americans feel that you're expressing hostility to *them*."

Surveys support Medved's theory. A *Hollywood Reporter* poll finds that nearly one in two Americans might shun a film starring an actor whose politics repulsed them. "The politics is definitely having an impact," observes Govindini Murty, an actress and editor of *Libertas*, an influential conservative film blog. "Do car companies insult Republicans in their ads?"

When Hollywood does put its liberal worldview aside to make movies that embody traditional values, it often scores big with the public. Consider 2004's *Spider-Man 2*, a sequel far better than the original. Directed by Sam Raimi, the movie is a visual wonder: the scenes of Spider-Man (played by soft-spoken Tobey Maguire) battling the tentacled benefactor-of-humanity-turned-terror-

SONY PICTURES/PHOTOFEST

Recent box-office winners, like *Spider-Man 2*, express conservative virtues.

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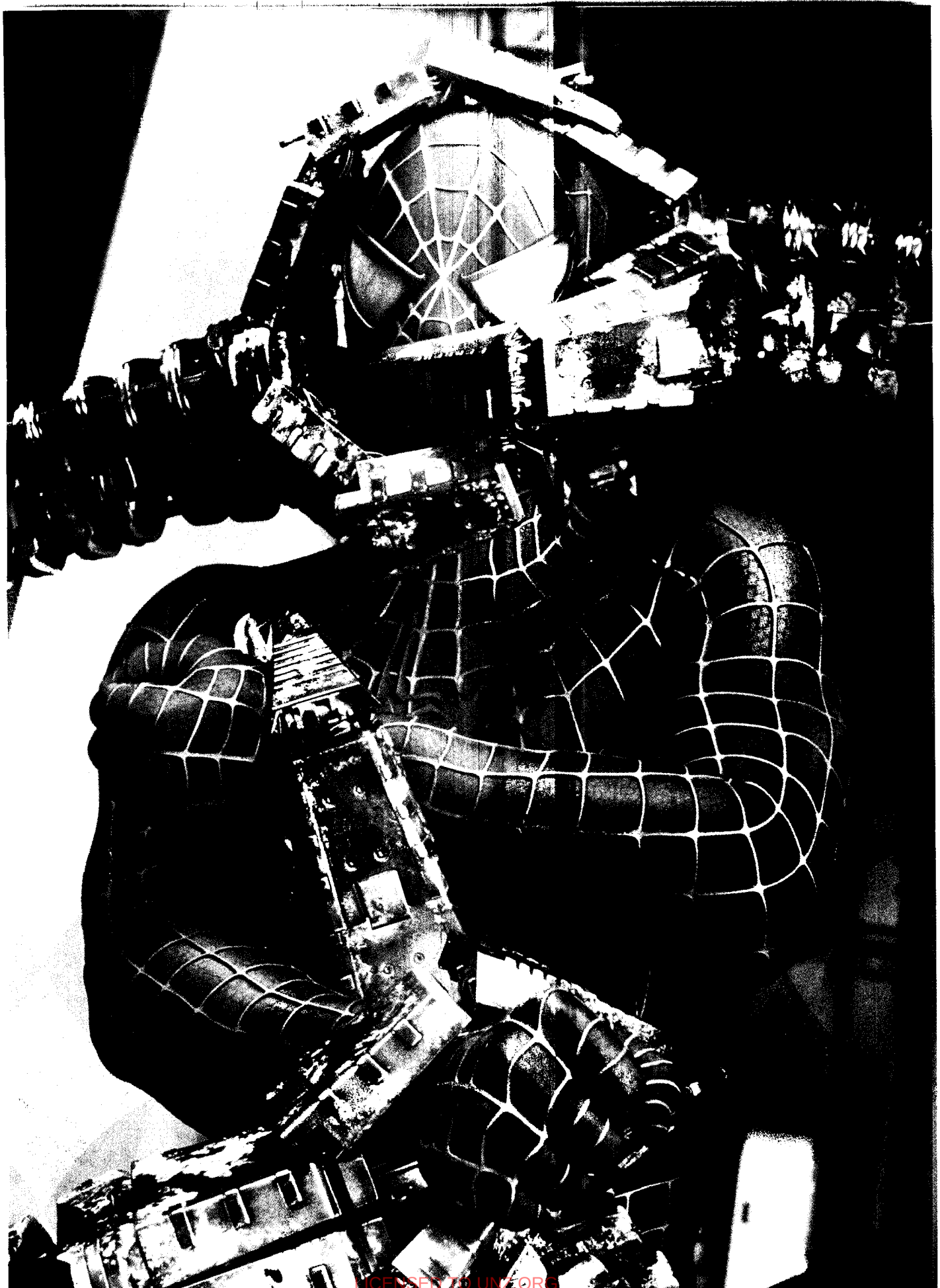

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ist Doctor Octopus (Alfred Molina) high above New York—furious tangles of fists, mechanical arms, and shattered glass and stone—virtually explode off the screen. *Spider-Man 2* is so eye-catching that you might miss the story's old-fashioned moral truths.

The movie is a fable about duty and heroism. Young Peter Parker decides to hang up his Spider-Man costume, since his super-heroics—made possible by the bite of a genetically mutated spider—have kept him from chasing his dreams, which include, above all, winning Mary Jane Watson (Kirsten Dunst). Parker takes this step after visiting an aging hippie doctor, Grateful Dead shirt under white scrubs, who advises, in vintage if-it-feels-good-do-it style: "You always have a choice."

Yet as city crime skyrockets and the threat of Doc Ock grows, Parker's conscience haunts him. In a crucial scene, his loving Aunt May (Rosemary Harris), the moral center of his life, sets him straight. "Everybody loves a hero," she says. "People line up for them, cheer them, scream their names. And years later, they'll tell how they stood in the rain for hours just to get a glimpse of the one who taught them how to hold on a second longer." Her old voice grows somber. "I believe there's a hero in all of us, that keeps us honest, gives us strength, makes us noble, and finally allows us to die with pride, even though sometimes we have to be steady, and give up the thing we want most. Even our dreams."

Struck by her plain wisdom, Parker eventually does the right thing, not his own thing: Spider-Man returns and saves Gotham from Doc Ock. Not, though, before a band of straphangers risk their lives by stepping between the injured superhero and his terrifying enemy, proving that one doesn't need superpowers to be valiant—a lesson that New Yorkers know well after September 11. The movie's essential message is exactly contrary to the guilt-free "just do it" ethos of the sixties: sometimes the choice you have to make, to live a morally meaningful life, is to do your duty. The movie resonated powerfully with the public, grossing a whopping $374 million domestically, and it took in another $400 million or so overseas. Factor in DVD sales, and you're getting close to a billion-dollar movie.

Pixar Studio's dazzling animated superhero film *The Incredibles* (2004) is another box-office winner—domestic gross $261 million—with a surprisingly right-of-center worldview. Writer and director Brad Bird's story, enjoyable for kids and their folks too, revolves around an appealing family of five, who just happen to be hiding the fact that they're superhuman. Like others with enhanced abilities, parents Bob and Helen Parr (the former Mr. Incredible and Elastigirl) "retired" with the help of the federal government's "superhero relocation program." Tort-crazy lawyers, you see, had slapped the superheroes with so many spurious lawsuits on behalf of those they'd saved—"He didn't ask to be saved, he didn't want to be saved," one lawyer histrionically complains—that it became impossible to use special abilities without incurring financial ruin. The Parrs now raise their kids in a typical American suburb, a seemingly typical family.

The defense of excellence—and frustration with the politically correct war against it—is a central theme of *The Incredibles*, as in a scene when Helen chides Bob for not attending their son Dash's "graduation" from fourth grade. "It's psychotic," Bob thunders. "They keep creating new ways to celebrate mediocrity, but if someone is genuinely exceptional. . . ." In another scene, Dash yearns to play school sports, but Helen says that his super-speed would make it unfair. "Dad always said our powers were nothing to be ashamed of—our powers made us special," Dash complains. "Everyone's special, Dash," his mother tritely replies. "That's just another way of saying no one is," ripostes Dash, glumly.

The film's science-wizard villain, Syndrome, seething at the superpowered (since he has no superpowers himself), has been killing off the heroes with his advanced technology, which he then will use to play champion. "Your oh-so-special powers," he

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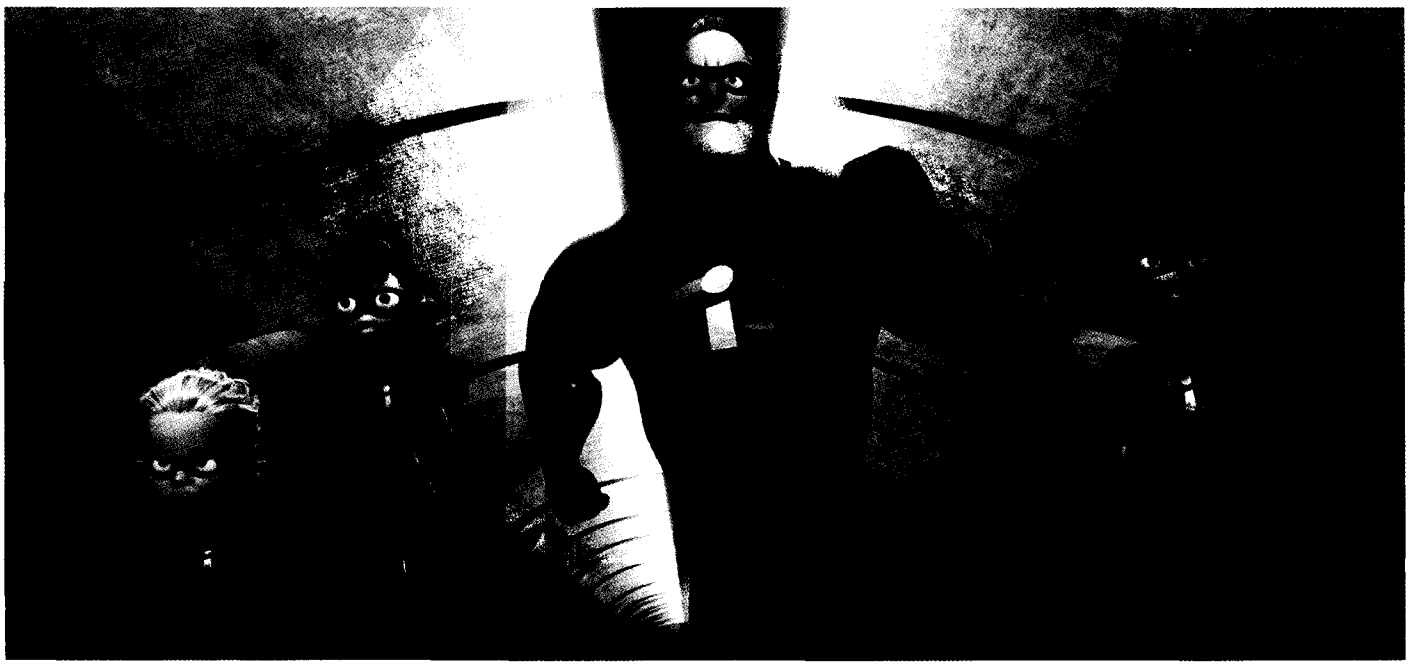

The animated smash *The Incredibles* embraces family values and out-of-the-ordinary (and therefore politically incorrect) excellence.

snarls at Bob. "I'll give them heroics. I'll give them the most spectacular heroics the world has ever seen! And when I'm old and I've had my fun, I'll sell my inventions, so that *everyone* can have powers. *Everyone* can be Super! And when everyone's Super . . . no one will be."

The Incredibles affectionately embraces the bourgeois family, flaws and all. The Parrs have their difficulties: teenager Violet is sullen, the kids fight, Mom and Dad bicker, Bob hates his drab insurance job. But for the Parr kids, the family bond is all-important: a worried Violet, suspecting (wrongly) that their middle-aged father might be having an affair—Helen has rushed off to rescue him—tells Dash, "Mom and Dad's lives could be in danger. Or worse—their *marriage*." And the parents will risk anything to protect their children, as the film thrillingly demonstrates more than once. Like Pixar's 2003 runaway winner *Finding Nemo*, the movie shows children "what adults are supposed to do," writes author Frederica Mathewes-Green on *National Review Online*—"to be brave and self-sacrificing, to defend children even at risk to themselves, to give, even in the face of ingratitude."

Nor are *Spider-Man 2* and *The Incredibles* the only recent movies to bring conservative values to the big screen and win huge, enthusiastic audiences. Robert Zemeckis's *Cast Away* (2000) is an updated *Robinson Crusoe*, starring Tom Hanks as Chuck Noland, a Federal Express troubleshooter marooned for years on a desert island. The movie makes us keenly aware of the benefits—the immense human achievement—of an advanced capitalist society. (Untypical for Hollywood, *Cast Away* depicts a big corporation as a caring and effective organization: when Noland returns after his rescue, FedEx takes him in like a long-lost family member.) For castaway Noland, a rotten tooth is a near-lethal problem, finding a little fresh water to drink a matter of existential urgency. "Zemeckis and [screenwriter William] Broyles file a brief in the case of *Locke* v. *Rousseau*,

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coming down squarely on the side of civilization," writes critic Jonathan Last. "There is nothing either romantic, or even beautiful, about the island Noland is stranded on. It is a prison." Noland's survival depends on the washed-up detritus of civilization: FedEx packages from his crashed cargo plane and a door torn from a port-a-potty, which becomes a makeshift sail.

Cast Away quietly repudiates the sexual revolution, too. Reunited with his true love, Kelly, Noland discovers that she has married and is a mother. The meeting is overwhelming for both—it's clear that Kelly still loves Noland, and his love for her, we know, has kept him going through his years of solitude. But Noland recognizes that his own happiness isn't paramount. "You gotta go home now," he says to Kelly, tearfully: there's now a family involved, and the family is the basic institution of the civilized order he has rejoined.

Finally, as he later reflects, Noland realizes that survival on the island required more than rational efficiency, as important as that is; he also needed something like faith. After his rescue, he tells a group of friends about succumbing to despair as a castaway and trying—and failing—to commit suicide. "I had power over *nothing*," he recalls. "And that's when this feeling came over me like a warm blanket. I knew, somehow, that I had to stay alive. Somehow . . . even though there was no reason to hope. And all my logic said that I would never see this place again. . . . And one day my logic was proven all wrong, because the tide came in, and gave me a sail." Perhaps we need more than reason alone to lift us above animal nature and become fully human, *Cast Away* implies. Though director Zemeckis on most accounts belongs to Hollywood's liberal establishment, this is a profoundly conservative film, like his earlier blockbuster *Forrest Gump*, which conservatives applauded as a repudiation of the sixties.

Martial virtues, long jeered at by liberal Hollywood, have enjoyed a big-screen comeback over the last half-decade or so. Peter Jackson's sweeping adaptation of J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001–2003) teaches us about the need for free men and women to stand up with military force to totalitarian evil—and about the potential of power to corrupt even the most decent from within. Many observers have likened Mordor's destructive horror in the movies to the Islamofascism that now threatens the West, just as readers of Tolkien's novels likened it to Nazism. The films have grossed over $1 billion domestically and twice that overseas. Spielberg's 1998 World War II blockbuster, *Saving Private Ryan*, devastatingly realistic in capturing the horror of military combat, also extols martial virtues, in the heroism and honor of U.S. soldiers.

And all this is before coming to Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, the 2004 movie that became a flashpoint in the nation's culture wars. An emotionally gripping and devout retelling of Christ's crucifixion in the dead languages of Aramaic and Latin, *The Passion* filled theaters worldwide with tradition-minded evangelicals and Catholics, many of whom rarely go to the movies. Despite fierce (and unjustified) criticism that the film was intolerant and anti-Semitic, *The Passion*, made for $30 million, grossed a staggering $370 million domestically and another $240 million overseas, making it one of the biggest movie sensations ever.

The size of the market for such conservative films first grew clear in the late sixties and seventies, when Hollywood nearly stopped making them. Swept up in the era's revolutionary spirit, the industry junked its decades-old production code—which mandated respect for marriage, the military, and religion, and forbade cussin' and nudity—and went in for movies geared to "a rebellious generation . . . challenging every cherished tenet of American society," as leftist film scholars Seth Cagin and Philip Dray approvingly put it. Production-code-era Hollywood hadn't ignored the darker side of human existence, but even its hardest-

NEWMARKET FILMS/PHOTOFEST

***The Passion*'s near-billion-dollar box-office success caught slumping Hollywood's attention.**

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boiled *noir* films weren't anything like this. The countercultural movies of "New Hollywood"—such as Arthur Penn's violent, criminal-glorifying *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), Robert Altman's cynical anti-war comedy *M.A.S.H.* (1970), Hal Ashby's sordid paean to the sexual revolution *Shampoo* (1975), and Martin Scorcese's urban nightmare *Taxi Driver* (1976)—wowed critics, who shared their anti-establishment and anti-American attitudes.

But moviegoers turned up their noses. Weekly film attendance in 1967, the first year after Hollywood dumped the production code, plummeted to 17.8 million, from 38 million the year before (television had already eroded moviegoing from its late-1940s peak of 90 million a week). "In a single one-year period," Medved notes, "more than half the movie audience disappeared—*by far* the largest one-year decline in the history of the motion picture business." That audience then hovered around 20 million for the next three decades, despite a growing U.S. population.

There's no mystery why so many stay home. Still dominated by countercultural types, Hollywood keeps churning out "edgy," envelope-pushing movies—more than half of its films receive R ratings, for example—and Americans keep giving them thumbs-down, as the correlation of profit and ratings shows. Only five of the 50 top-grossing movies of all time have R ratings, and 13 of the top 100. A big 2005 Dove Foundation study examined the 3,000 most widely distributed Hollywood movies from 1989 through 2003 in each ratings category. It found PG- and PG-13-rated films between three and four times more profitable on average than R-rated ones—and G films, like this year's hit nature documentary, *March of the Penguins*, more profitable still. The average R movie loses $6.9 million, the study showed; the average PG movie made nearly $30 million; the typical G movie made over $70 million. And a Christian Film and Television Commission study of the box-office receipts of the top 250 movies over the last three years found that films expressing a strong traditional moral message, whatever their ratings, earned four to seven times as much as movies pushing a left-wing cultural agenda.

Hollywood owes its best recent years—2002 and 2003, when it cracked the 30 million ticket mark again for the first time since 1966—largely to the massive box-office success of a handful of conservative, family-friendly movies, including the first two *Lord of the Rings* installments, *Finding Nemo*, and the low-budget smash *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, virtually an ethnic *Father Knows Best*. The non-R movies draw more children to the theaters, as you'd expect, and more moviegoers 40 and up, too—their parents. "The largest consumer segment in America is mainstream families with traditional values," emphasizes Dove chairman Dick Rolfe. National Association of Theater Owners head John Fithian concurs: "Family values sell tickets."

There's a simple explanation of why Tinseltown churns out so many commercial duds. Elite filmmakers want to make moola, of course—and they still do, lots of it, though not nearly as much as they could be making. But giving the public what it wants isn't their prime motivation. More important is their wish for recognition as artists from peers, critics, and the liberal elites, says Emmy- and Oscar-nominated writer and director Lionel Chetwynd, one of Hollywood's most vocal conservatives. "And it has been true from the late sixties on that if you wanted to be seen as an artist, you have to be a liberal—you have to rail against the government, be edgy," he adds. Having the right artistic vision can mean other social advantages, too. "Making something commercially successful and appealing to a broad public, like *The Incredibles*, is less likely to get a Rebecca Romijn look-alike to sleep with you than making dark, hard-hitting, critically acclaimed material like *Million Dollar Baby*," says longtime Hollywood watcher Medved.

Further reinforcing Hollywood's leftish leanings are liberal interest groups that monitor script content for "offensive"—read: politically incorrect—content. This pressure can utterly transform a film

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project, as Tom Clancy will tell you. In his novel *The Sum of All Fears*, Muslim terrorists explode a nuke at the Super Bowl. When Clancy optioned the book and the film went into development, the Council on American Islamic Relations got to work. The 2002 film villains: white neo-Nazis, not Muslim fanatics. Some Hollywood production companies actually have outreach offices that contact advocacy groups ahead of production to vet potential film scripts. "Keep in mind [that] one of the reasons why the FBI or the government or business are the villains is because everyone else has a constituency," former Motion Picture Association head Jack Valenti points out.

The PC concerns, internalized in scriptwriters' heads even before any advocate complains, can produce bizarre incoherence. Novelist and screenwriter Andrew Klavan's *True Crime* is about an innocent white man on death row, railroaded because officials needed to prove that the death penalty isn't racially biased. "The only one who figures this out is this politically incorrect journalist who can see through the B.S.," Klavan relates. The gripping 1999 movie version, directed by and starring Clint Eastwood as journalist Steve Everett, transforms the innocent death-row inmate into a black man (played by Isaiah Washington). The movie works, even if it takes the anti-PC edge off Klavan's novel. But the screenplay leaves in a sequence depicting a black woman confronting journalist Everett for caring only about injustices against whites and not blacks—even though the movie now revolves around the reporter's relentless quest to exonerate a wrongly convicted African American. "That scene no longer makes any sense," Klavan laughs. "The screenwriter apparently found the original politically inappropriate."

Even so, jolted by *The Passion*'s huge success, Hollywood seems to be catching on that it is neglecting a large part of its potential audience. "When something does nearly $400 million in U.S. box office, and it isn't in English—it makes an impression," says former Universal Pictures boss Frank Price. The *New York Times* reported in July that studios have hired "newly minted experts in Christian marketing" to help sell movies with religious or family themes to red-state America. After cold-shouldering Gibson when he shopped around *The Passion*—he famously had to finance it himself—the studios lined up for the chance to distribute his next movie, the Mayan-language *Apocalypto*, with Disney landing the deal.

But a movie comes out of a worldview, and the Hollywood of Barbra Streisand, Rob Reiner, and Alec Baldwin may still not get it. *Libertas*'s Murty says that a publicist for Ridley Scott's expensive 2004 flop about the Crusades, *Kingdom of Heaven*, asked her and her filmmaker husband, Jason Apuzzo, for advice on marketing the film to conservatives and Christians. Invited to a press screening along with representatives of various Christian groups, the two watched in disbelief as the movie opened with a Catholic priest beheading a woman and stealing her rosary—and went on in that vein, while also presenting the Muslims as noble and wise. "Every single person directly associated with the Church in the movie is a murderer or a liar. They really thought this would appeal to Christians," Murty recounts. "Some of these people live in this completely sealed world in West Hollywood and didn't register how offensive the movie would be."

Nevertheless, several indicators suggest that the film industry's cultural stance may be changing more dramatically than hiring some new marketers. For starters, Hollywood is home to a growing right-of-center presence, including hotshot young producers like Mike De Luca of DreamWorks and Gavin Pollone, and rising screenwriters like Craig Mazin, Cyrus Nowrasteh, and Klavan. What's more, if reports are true, other young Hollywood types are on the Right, but keep their views quiet, for fear of career trouble in a still-liberal town. "It's becoming increasingly clear that a significant majority of the young people coming into Hollywood are conservative," opined Chetwynd this summer. Last fall, *Details* magazine's exposé "Young and Republican in

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Hollywood" caused a stir by "outing" comedian Adam Sandler, actor Freddie Prinze Jr., and others as secret right-wingers. AMC's 2004 documentary *Rated R: Republicans in Hollywood*, directed by former Democratic speechwriter Jesse Mosse, concludes that Hollywood will be shifting right as the under-40s become its new establishment. Already reinforcing David Horowitz's long-established Wednesday Morning Club, which hosts conservative speakers for open-minded industry listeners, are such newly formed right-wing salons as the Hollywood Congress of Republicans and the discreet Sunday Evening Club, for still-closeted rightists.

When a trendsetter like Polone (subject of a glowing 2004 *New York Times Magazine* cover story) can observe that "we live in a much more conservative country than the entertainment industry had thought it was, and it would be much smarter for them to move in that direction," it's a pretty safe bet that the new Hollywood establishment will indeed be very different from the one that it soon will replace.

No one seems better positioned to move Hollywood right than billionaire Philip Anschutz, whose Anschutz Film Group oversees two studios: Walden Media and Bristol Bay Productions. Owner of everything from oil fields to railroads to newspapers, and a major contributor to conservative causes, Anschutz decided not long ago to begin a career as a twenty-first-century Louis B. Mayer. His agenda: producing humanistic, family-oriented films. "We expect them to be entertaining, but also to be life affirming and to carry a moral message," he told a Hillsdale College audience last year. Anschutz sees a golden market opportunity in such movies. "Hollywood as an industry can at times be insular and doesn't at times understand the market very well," he explained. But he also "saw a chance with this move to attempt some small improvement in the culture."

Like an old-time film mogul, Anschutz has nailed down the distribution side. His Regal Entertainment is the nation's largest movie-theater chain, with about 18 percent of all U.S. indoor screens. He keeps a firm hand on the creative process. "Many things happen between the time you hatch an idea for a movie and the time that it gets to theaters—and most of them are bad," he told his Hillsdale listeners. "So you need to control the type of writers you have, the type of directors you get, the type of actors you employ, and the type of editors that work on the final product."

Anschutz demanded, for instance, that director Taylor Hackford revise the 2004 Ray Charles biopic, *Ray*, toning down the film's focus on the performer's drug problems and sexual exploits. After initially threatening to quit, Hackford came around to Anschutz's more family-oriented vision. The resulting movie is an honest—there's no effort to whitewash the drugs and womanizing—but ultimately inspiring narrative of Charles's successful perseverance against the great odds of his own blindness and moral flaws and society's racism. The movie—funded entirely by Anschutz, after every major studio had rejected it—garnered six Oscar nominations, winning two, including Best Actor for Jamie Foxx, riveting in the title role.

Anschutz is off to a gangbuster start, and not just because of *Ray*. This year's bittersweet *Because of Winn-Dixie*, based on the children's novel by Kate DiCamillo, tells the story of ten-year-old Opal (newcomer Annasophia Robb) and her preacher father (Jeff Daniels), who've just moved to a lower-middle-class Florida town as the movie opens. Opal's mother, hating being a preacher's wife, had abandoned the family several years earlier. The film unsentimentally captures the pain and loneliness that divorce causes children to feel. Portraying both small-town America and the Baptist faith with unpretentious sympathy, *Winn-Dixie* made back most of its modest $14 million production budget on its opening weekend and is currently one of the top-selling DVDs in the country.

PHOTOFEST

The theme of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy is man's need to oppose evil with force.

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Anschutz's most ambitious effort yet is the forthcoming $150 million adaptation of C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, a Walden Media–Disney co-production opening in December—the first in what Anschutz hopes is a long-running franchise. The Narnia books—an extended allegory of Christ's resurrection—have sold 120 million copies worldwide, "more than either Harry Potter or *Lord of the Rings*," Anschutz notes, suggesting the eye-popping box-office potential. Walden will work closely with Christian organizations to market the film.

A third signal that the film world is growing less culturally monolithic is the launch last year of two annual conservative film festivals: the American Film Renaissance Festival in Dallas (and soon to expand to other cities) and the Liberty Film Festival in Hollywood. Featuring conservative-themed movies, panel discussions, awards, and other events, both proved wildly popular and generated wide press coverage, including articles in *Time* and *USA Today*.

The festivals also generated golden networking opportunities. After a Michael Medved talk at AFR's event, festival co-founder Jim Hubbard tells me, several aspiring filmmakers in the audience held up finished DVDs and complained that they couldn't find distribution. "Here I am," announced David Goodman, who had just started his own distribution company. He swiftly signed distribution deals for several films, among them *Is It True What They Say About Ann?*, an amusing documentary on liberal-baiting controversialist Ann Coulter (she signs one left-wing college student's shirt: "Have fun in Guantánamo!").

Feisty independent documentaries dominated both festivals; many, like Chetwynd's *Celsius 41.11: The Temperature at Which the Brain Begins to Die*, were pointed rebuttals to Michael Moore's mendacious oeuvre. Winning the Best Documentary award at the Liberty Film Festival was Stephen Bannon and Timothy Walkin's *In the Face of Evil*, based on Peter Schweitzer's bestseller *Reagan's War*. The viewer comes away from the film's canny account of Reagan's anti-communist efforts, from his Hollywood days in the 1940s until the fall of the Berlin Wall, with a sense of the late president's greatness—and of the decisive importance of political leadership. "As someone who had lived these times, I was very moved by the detail and emotion in which they were brought out on film," pronounced former Polish president Lech Walesa.

If the festivals produced a potential star documentarian, it's Evan Coyne Maloney, 33, an affable ex–software developer. His hilarious and disturbing 45-minute short, *Brainwashing 101*, exposes PC bullying at several universities. In one revealing sequence, pompous Bucknell economics prof Geoffrey Schneider gleefully acknowledges his desire to subvert the values that his students have learned from their parents. "Imagine your typical very wealthy Bucknell student taking a course which is a critique of capitalism and often saying things like: 'Your parents are doing awful things around the globe, either indirectly or directly,'" Schneider crows. The "big danger" at Bucknell, in Schneider's view? "Our trustees have made noises every now and then about interfering in the curricula and making sure that we have enough different perspectives." Horrors!

These documentaries represent the Right's first efforts to compete on a cinematic terrain long dominated by liberals. It's a crucial development, says Lee Troxler, a former Reagan aide who wrote and helped produce *Fahrenhype 9/11*, a sober refutation of Moore's monster-hit polemic *Fahrenheit 9/11* that has shown on 500 campuses and sold a half-million DVDs. "Just as the pamphlet was the persuasive tool of choice during the American Revolution, the documentary has become a valuable tool in politics and culture today," Troxler argues. "You can bring it out very quickly, without spending a lot of money—the technology makes it possible." Reagan documentary co-director Bannon, a conservative Catholic, is equally revved up about the medium. "If the last election showed one thing, it's that culture drives politics," he told the *New York Times* in June. "I want to take the form that is

WALT DISNEY PICTURES/PHOTOFEST

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With films like his forthcoming *Chronicles of Narnia*, newly minted movie mogul Philip Anschutz seeks to transform the culture of the industry.

now owned by the Left—the documentary—and use it to help drive an overall political agenda that supports the culture of life."

After long using liberal Hollywood as a political punching bag, conservatives are moving to an if-you-can't-beat-them-join-them approach. If they can create a popular cinema that artistically reflects a right-of-center worldview—rather than crudely imposes it—it would be a huge advance for the Right in America's ongoing cultural struggles. After all, it's not just reason and analysis that will decide the outcome of those struggles. The imagination and the heart—the Dream Factory's stock-in-trade—will play at least as large a part.

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Justice to Elia Kazan

Harry Stein

When Elia Kazan, one of the twentieth century's great American theater and movie directors, died two years ago, the obituaries almost all struck the same sour note. As the *New York Times* put it, in addition to his artistic accomplishments, Kazan committed "what many still consider one of the great ideological betrayals in American performing arts history." The *Los Angeles Times*, the movie business's hometown paper, announced his death with a straightforward page one headline, ELIA KAZAN, 1909–2003, but then got down to cases in the subhead: STAGE AND SCREEN TRIUMPHS WERE ECLIPSED BY HIS TESTIMONY AGAINST COLLEAGUES IN THE BLACKLIST ERA.

For many "progressives"—especially in the entertainment business—"eclipsed" doesn't begin to tell the story. Over the entire half-century after he "named names" to the House Un-American Activities Committee on April 12, 1952, Kazan remained the very embodiment of a self-serving, backstabbing rat bastard. The assumption about his moral turpitude rests on another assumption, so often echoed in books, movies, and classrooms that by now it appears an indisputable fact: that the blacklist was a straightforward case of good versus evil, pitting decent Americans defending free thought and expression against the vilest forces of reaction.

Like the most heavy-handed Hollywood "message" movie, such a view allows for zero ethical complexity—and it is nonsense. While no one can deny or excuse the bullying and moral corruption of federal investigators, the term routinely applied to their work—"witch hunt"—is entirely misleading. Mid-twentieth-century Hollywood, California, had nothing in common with seventeenth-century Salem, Massachusetts. In Hollywood, the witches—communist activists, working surreptitiously to advance Soviet interests—were all too real.

That today's Hollywood liberals continue to celebrate their Old Left forebears as selfless martyrs doubtless sometimes results from ignorance. Many celebrities get their history from movies or from one another, and they're suckers for good-guy-versus-bad-guy takes on complex events. Hence the rhapsodic Hollywood reaction to George Clooney's new *Good Night, and Good Luck*, a film chronicling CBS newsman Edward R. Murrow's clash with Senator Joseph McCarthy that scrupulously resists any suggestion that communism posed a meaningful danger. In the Bush era, Hollywood's blinkered view of the blacklist reinforces its smug sense of itself as a fighter for truth and justice against what it sees as a thuggish government. Rich, powerful, perfectly free to denounce the nation's policies and leaders to a willing press, liberal celebrities glory in casting themselves as the descendants of the brave but powerless individuals who paid such a high price for resisting the bullies of HUAC.

Never was this fantasy clearer than on October 27, 1997, when elderly blacklist victims and the new Hollywood came together at the Motion Picture Academy to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the HUAC hearings. The evening featured a documentary, *Hollywood Remembers the Blacklist*, but things really took off when such contemporary stars as Billy Crystal, John Lithgow and Kevin Spacey reenacted the stirring testimony of blacklisted actors and writers. Following the performances, the current heads of the Screen Actors Guild and the Directors Guild apologized for their predecessors' failure to stand up to Washington bullies and pledged: Never again!

Then, most thrilling of all, an actual relic of that time, the blacklisted writer Paul Jarrico, 82, rose to speak. While never mentioning Stalinism, Jarrico explained why the government had it in for people like him. Stirring up the Red scare and McCarthyism, he said, were the same kind of Americans responsible for bigotry, the genocide of Native Americans, and "repression of dissent." Leftists

Hollywood never forgave the great director Elia Kazan for naming names.

CONSTANTINE MANOS/MAGNUM PHOTOS

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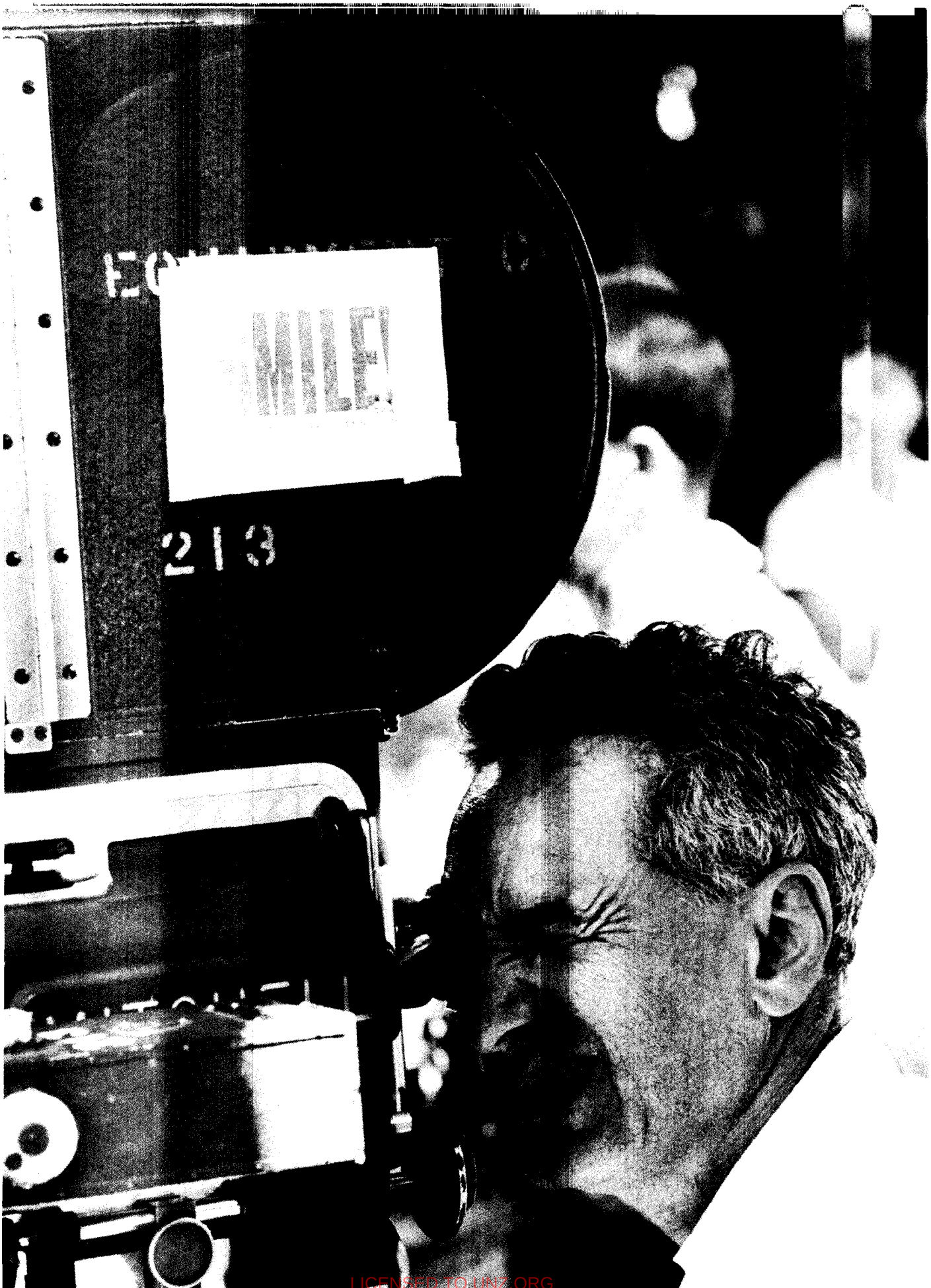

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like him, by contrast, dedicated themselves to the "fight to end racism, to end sexism, to end the obscene chasm between poverty and wealth." Jarrico ended with words to warm the hearts of the assembled celebrities, as they headed back to their lavish homes in their luxury cars. "It may take another 50 years," he declared, "but we shall overcome. The good guys will win."

No one mentioned Elia Kazan's name from the stage that night—that would've been to give the skunk an introduction at the garden party. But as a chief villain in the blacklist myth, Kazan got his due and then some, when two years later the Motion Picture Academy announced that it would at last award the sickly 89-year-old filmmaker a lifetime-achievement Oscar. The firestorm that followed split Hollywood between those who insisted that Kazan should never be forgiven and those who argued that honoring his artistic work wasn't the same as excusing his testimony. None defended Kazan's actions a half-century earlier. "His lifetime achievement is the destruction of lives," raged 79-year-old Norma Barzman, a blacklisted writer who spearheaded protests against the award. "I hope somebody shoots him," snapped 87-year-old screenwriter Abe Polonsky.

What put Kazan beyond redemption wasn't simply his cooperation with HUAC. He could still have won forgiveness. At the 50th-anniversary event, after all, Billy Crystal sympathetically re-created Larry Parks's testimony, in which the *Jolson Story* star begged the committee not to force him to betray his friends, before—in tears, an obviously broken man—giving in.

But far from repentant, Kazan was defiant. The day after his HUAC appearance, he took out a *New York Times* ad entitled, almost regally, A STATEMENT BY ELIA KAZAN. "I believe that Communist activities confront the people of this country with an unprecedented and exceptionally tough problem," it read. "That is, how to protect ourselves from a dangerous and alien society and still keep the free, open, healthy way of life that gives us self-respect." The only way that the American people could solve this problem wisely, Kazan continued, was to "have the facts about Communism." Kazan then briefly recounted his youth in the communist movement and the contempt that he came to have for the totalitarian mentality that he'd seen firsthand.

Why hadn't he come forward earlier? Kazan asked rhetorically. "I was held back, primarily, by concern for the reputations and employment of people who may, like myself, have left the Party many years ago." Also holding him back was "a piece of specious reasoning" that had silenced many. "It goes like this: 'You may hate the Communists, but you must not attack them or expose them, because if you do you are attacking the right to hold unpopular opinions and you are joining the people who attack civil liberties.' " Kazan was blunt: "I have thought soberly about this. It is, simply, a lie."

A complex and contradictory man, outgoing but given to gloomy self-reflection, Kazan conceded in his autobiography that his haughty defiance was largely a pose. "Any time you hurt people, and I did hurt some people, you don't like it," he wrote. Yet self-serving as it undoubtedly was—for his HUAC testimony allowed him to keep working in Hollywood—Kazan's statement also expressed his deepest beliefs.

Born Elia Kazanjoglous into a long-brutalized Greek minority in the Turkish province of Anatolia, Kazan arrived in New York in 1913 at age four. Always grateful to the country that saved his life, he never lost a powerful sense of being an outsider. At the height of his celebrity, working in the most collaborative of professions, he still felt ill at ease revealing himself, hiding instead, like his imperious rug-salesman father, George, behind the "Anatolian smile," bred over centuries of oppression to mask anger and resentment. Everything in Kazan's early experience reinforced his sense of difference—and the insecurity and independence of mind it tended to foster in equal measure. Even in Gotham's ethnic stew, Kazan's family stood out as foreign,

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Some see Kazan's *On the Waterfront*, in which Marlon Brando suffers for exposing corruption, as an allegory of the director's own experience.

and nothing changed when the family moved to suburban New Rochelle, where his father continued to wear a fez to work.

Kazan's alienation from his peers is evident in the 1926 New Rochelle High School yearbook, in which the photo of the intense young man with a thick nest of black hair is the only one unaccompanied by a list of student clubs and activities. The obligatory cheery note below the photo is almost mocking: "Eli has been so backward in coming forward that we'll have to tell you what we found out—he puts over anything he tackles. Girls, what wouldn't you give for that hair? Maybe it grew that way in Constantinople." Nor did Kazan fit in at Williams College—"a

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pompous, reactionary gentleman's school," he later called it. He couldn't get in to a fraternity and had to wait the tables and wash the dishes of his fellow students to make ends meet. His sense of being nothing to the school's moneyed swells laid "the emotional groundwork for me to join the Communist Party," he later reflected.

That commitment blossomed after college and a stint at the Yale Drama School, when Kazan joined the Group Theater, New York's top left-wing Depression-era theatrical company. Run by the gifted trio of Harold Clurman, Cheryl Crawford, and Lee Strasberg, the Group boasted among its 30 or so actors such landmark talents as Stella and Luther Adler, Morris Carnovsky, and John Garfield. Its biggest star, though, was playwright Clifford Odets, whose stirring social dramas gave him a stature that rivaled Eugene O'Neill's. For many, the Group was less a theater than a cause, many of its shows unapologetically leftist in ways that today's audience would find shocking. Group members proudly called themselves a "collective" and held commercialism to be a dirty word. Their aim was to change the world.

PHOTOFEST

Though he broke with the communism of the Group Theater, above, Kazan (middle row, far right) remained on the left.

adge," as his Group comrades now called him—short for "Gadget," for his willingness to do anything, from furniture repair to press agentry—swiftly graduated from assistant stage manager to character actor. Kazan was a generous, if highly competitive, colleague, sharp with a sense of his own possibilities. Not coincidentally, Kazan, who graduated from college a virgin—and who in his seventies still bitterly recalled the nights he waited on wild frat parties, eyeing the lascivious coeds to whom he was permanently invisible—now had all the women he wanted in this milieu, as sexually unrestrained as the most relaxed college campus would be 35 years later. Through his two marriages, Kazan remained an avid and unapologetic womanizer. "I was faithful to her in every way except sexually," he wrote, meaning it, of his longtime, devoted first wife, Molly.

But work always came first. Kazan's big break as an actor came in Odets's *Waiting for Lefty*. Set in a clamorous meeting of New York taxi drivers during a 1934 strike, *Lefty* pitted decent left-wing working stiffs against the union's corrupt, boss-owned leadership. Kazan's role was tiny but pivotal. For most of the play, he sat in the audience, his cue coming at the play's climax, when one of the good guys proclaims: "[T]he man who got me food in 1932, he calls me COMRADE! The man who picked me up where I bled, he called me COMRADE too! What are we waiting for? Don't wait for Lefty! He might never come!" Now, rushing the stage—and taken by many in the audience to be a real taxi driver—Kazan announced: "They found Lefty—behind the car barns, with a bullet in his head." At that, the "workers" erupted in a cry, taken up by the audience at every performance: "Strike, strike, strike!"

The reviews sang. "The Group Theater gives its most slashing performance in this drama about the taxi strike," raved the *Times*'s Brooks Atkinson. "The most exciting

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workers' drama we have seen yet," seconded the *New York Post*. Needless to say, the *Daily Worker* loved it, too: "Swept the audience off its feet. A high-water mark of revolutionary drama." Kazan would look back to *Lefty*'s opening night as his most memorable theater experience.

In such a milieu, Kazan readily gravitated toward the Communist Party, with its professed agenda of social justice and international peace. "Idealism was our answer to the Great Depression," he later reflected. "Comradeship buffered us in a society many of us, for one reason or another, considered hostile." He formally joined the party in 1934. Soon afterward, he co-authored *Dimitrof: A Play of Mass Pressure*, agitprop about a Belgian communist falsely accused of setting the Reichstag fire. He got his first shot at directing with an anti–New Deal play called *The Young Go First*, mounted by a marginal leftist collective.

It was no secret that many in the Group were ardent communists—reviews would blandly mention the fact. Over time, though, the company's relentless politics began to limit its audience. A string of commercial flops so damaged the Group's finances—never solid at the best of times—that members were at one point bringing home only $25 a week. To address the crisis, the co-directors, though fierce leftists, ordered members to shun overt political activity.

For Kazan, the directive soon led to a personal crisis. Already, the way that the Group's communists operated behind the scenes disturbed him. The party might give lip service to democracy but didn't practice it. "You'd have to go to Actors' Equity," he'd later recall, "and pretend you're just one of the guys, when you're really part of a program that's been decided on before the meeting." Now, in response to the new policy, the party ordered Kazan and his theatrical comrades to seize the Group from the directors. Kazan realized that such a coup would be a disaster for the company and said so to several colleagues—privately, he thought.

No such luck. Reported to party higher-ups, Kazan had to endure the most humiliating evening of his life. At a special meeting, chaired by a "Leading Comrade"—a UAW leader imported for the occasion all the way from Detroit—Kazan found himself dressed down for resisting "Party discipline" and for being an "opportunist" currying favor with "the bosses." After his Group comrades eagerly piled on, Kazan was ritualistically offered the chance to grovel, recant, and return to the fold. Instead, disgusted and furious, he went home and fired off a letter, quitting the Communist Party.

Kazan's break with the party at first changed little in his life. He remained determinedly leftist, and his relations with his old comrades went on mostly unchanged. But as the Group tottered on its last legs, Kazan had to look for new sources of income. Hollywood seemed promising, and in 1940 he moved west, together with several Group colleagues. Harold Clurman later recalled walking onto the Warner Brothers lot and spotting his ragtag buddies Carnovsky, Kazan, and Odets, cracking wise in New Yorkese as they lolled in the California sunshine—a sight so incongruous that he doubled over with laughter. In the end, limited by his ethnicity, Kazan appeared in just one worthwhile film: a supporting role in *City for Conquest*, a 1940 Jimmy Cagney gangster flick. But already he saw that his future lay in directing—especially for the movies. His brief film-acting stint had helped him understand the startling way that the camera "records thoughts and feelings," penetrating "into a person, under the surface display."

Hollywood was in political transition. The studio system, presided over by autocrats and trading on the glamour of its stars, remained the industry's public face. But a number of developments—including the influx of talent from the East Coast and war-ravaged Europe—began to alter the town's innate conservatism.

Working slyly to advance these political changes were communist operatives, led by German theater veteran Otto

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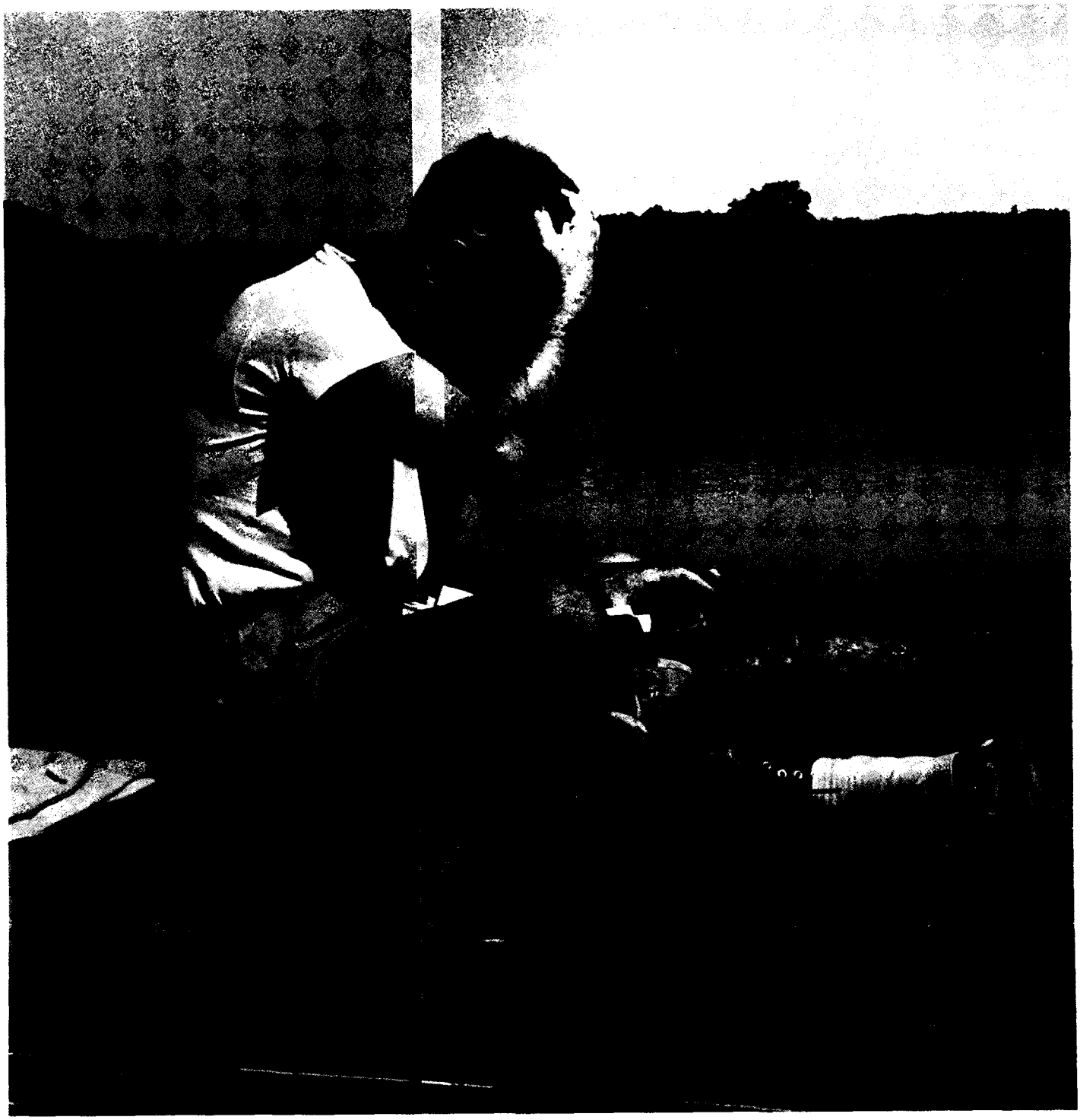
Urbanities



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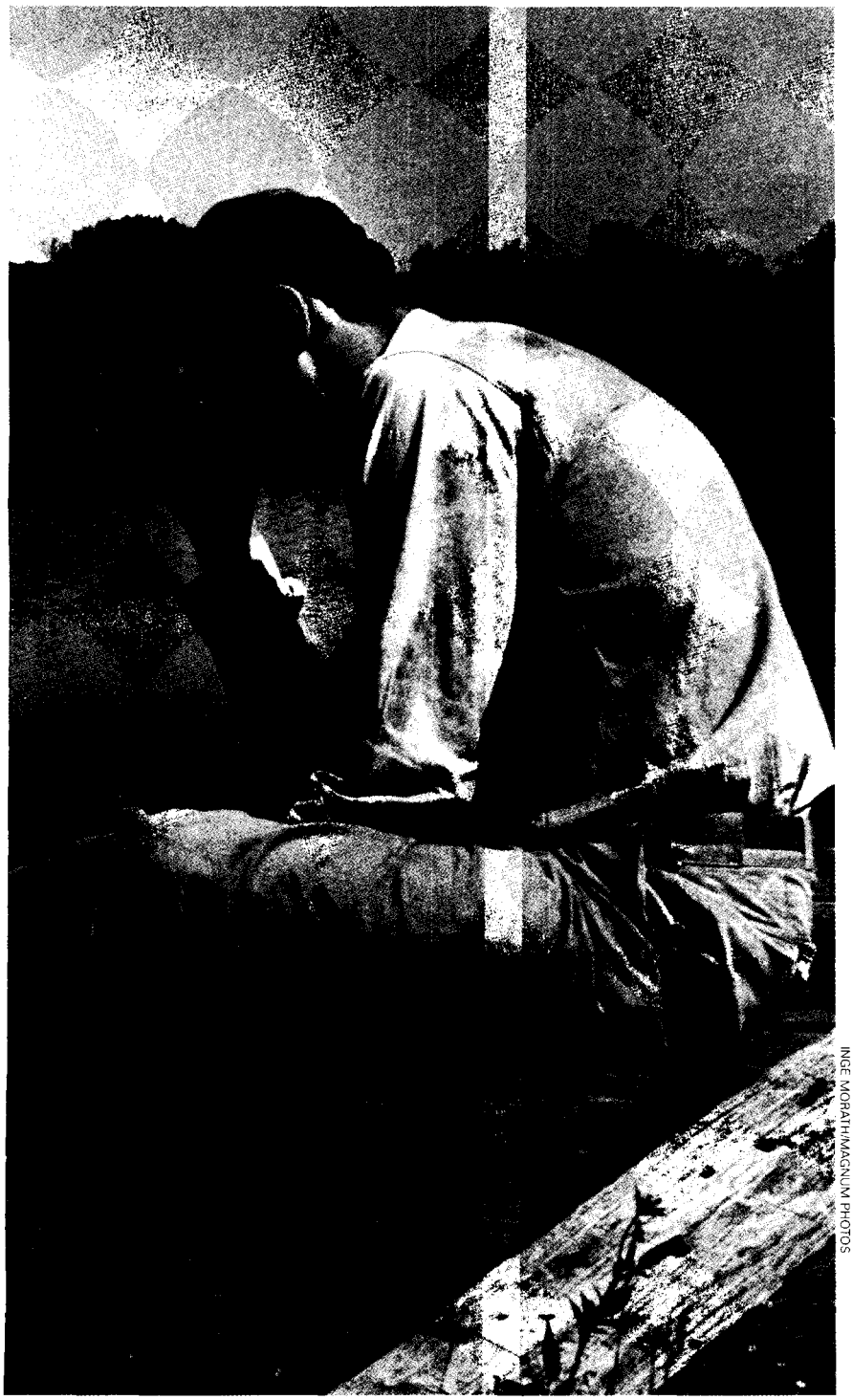

INGE MORATH/MAGNUM PHOTOS

Kazan (on left) brought to the stage classics of the American theater by his then-friends Arthur Miller (right) and Tennessee Williams.

Katz. According to historian Stephen Koch, Moscow had sent Katz to California to organize communist front organizations and radical unions, and he succeeded beyond all expectations. "Columbus discovered America," Katz would boast, "and I discovered Hollywood." The growing communist influence in the industry was clearest in the push for radical unionism. For instance, party activists, led by Kazan's old Group comrade J. Howard Larson, dominated the newly formed Writers Guild.

As party members took up key positions in the studio hierarchy, they began to wield power. As associate producers, story editors, and even agents, they not only saw to it that fellow communists got work but—in a sort of reverse blacklist—made sure that anti-communists *didn't*. "There's no question they looked out for their own," observes Hollywood writer Burt Prelutsky, a former liberal who has migrated rightward. "Morrie Ryskind had . . . written some great pictures, including *A Night at the Opera*," Prelutsky continues, "but he'd broken with the party and become a Republican. For a time he couldn't get arrested in this town."

F. Scott Fitzgerald, who spent his last years as a studio hack, well understood the political climate of that time. "The important thing is you

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should not argue with them," he wrote of Hollywood leftists. "Whatever you say they have ways of twisting it into shapes which put you in some lower category of mankind, 'Fascist,' 'Liberal,' 'Trotskyist,' and disparage you both intellectually and personally in the process."

Well-positioned party members also worked to bar the making of anti-communist films. In a 1946 *Worker* article, screenwriter Dalton Trumbo noted with satisfaction that prominent anti-communist books of the thirties and forties such as Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* never made it to the big screen. Nor did any script touching on the Ukraine famine or the Moscow show trials.

Moscow's ultimate Hollywood goal, Koch explains, was to "Stalinize the glamour culture"—that is, associate in the public mind left-wing views and celebrated entertainers, lending those views respectability. This project could also enable the party to tap "Hollywood's great guilty wealth as a cash cow."

Events 6,000 miles away helped further the communists' Hollywood ends. As a cause both noble and almost certainly lost, the Spanish Civil War played well in Tinseltown, with the communist-dominated Hollywood Anti-Nazi League setting the tone for that era's version of radical chic. Reporter Murray Kempton, himself a reformed leftist, described a war relief fund-raiser at the home of a major producer, featuring *New Masses* editor Joseph Freeman as the speaker. Appalled at seeing the friend who'd driven him to the shindig snubbed by the Hollywood heavyweights present for the sin of being a mere writer, Freeman pointedly addressed his remarks to the serving help. Two members of the wait staff, it turned out, were German Jewish refugees; deeply moved by Freeman's words, they burst into tears—which, in turn, so moved the producers and stars that they dug deeper into their wallets. Afterward, recalled Kempton, "Freeman's Hollywood comrades congratulated him on a brilliant piece of stage business."

As the Spanish war wound down to its sorry conclusion, it prompted ever more fervent Hollywood benefits and rallies, their sponsors and steering committees packed with communists and credulous fellow travelers—some of whom would one day lose their careers for doing nothing more than signing some petitions. Screenwriter Abraham Polonsky later pointed to the endless round of benefits as proof that the American party was just a "social" organization. More serious observers argued that, in the end, the party's Hollywood branch was almost comically ineffectual, a bunch of gullible idealists whose idea of subversion consisted of slipping a few lines into a film.

Nonetheless, by the late thirties only the willfully blind could deny that the party was a wholly owned Soviet subsidiary, working on behalf of Moscow's policy goals. Nor, by then, could any fair-minded observer fail to grasp the nature of the Soviet regime. Reliable reporting had described Stalin's brutal purges in Russia, and in 1939 fascism's supposedly most stalwart foe signed a non-aggression pact with Hitler. Among the committed, no hint of embarrassment showed. "I don't believe in that fine, little republic of Finland that everyone gets so weepy about," sneered playwright Lillian Hellman as Stalin's forces, temporarily freed from their preoccupation with Germany, crushed their northern neighbor.

For a time, World War II saved American communism from itself. After Hitler stabbed Stalin in the back and Pearl Harbor brought the U.S. into the war and Russia became our ally against fascism, the American Communist Party entered the mainstream as never before. In Hollywood, old antagonisms eased. For many on the Left, it was increasingly possible to envision communism as "twentieth-century Americanism," as the party slogan went.

By now, Kazan, back in New York, was more involved with his career than with politics. Dubbed the "boy genius of Broadway" after directing Thornton Wilder's 1942 Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Skin of Our Teeth*, Kazan brought to the stage over the

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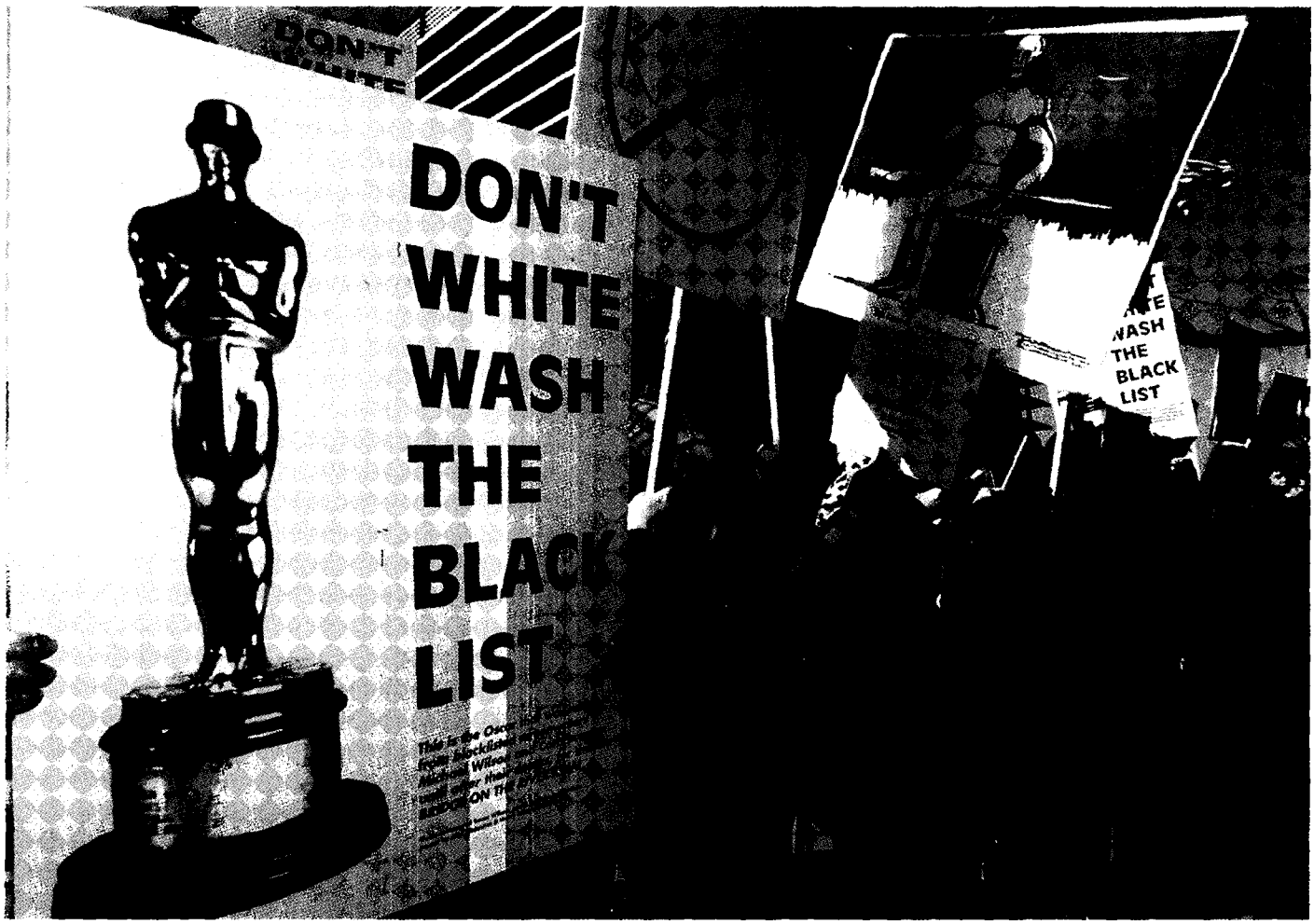

Many in Hollywood erupted in rage over Kazan's lifetime Oscar, awarded in 1999.

next few years a catalog of the masterworks of mid-twentieth-century theater. Propelled by his Broadway success, his film-directing career soon took off, too. His debut picture was *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (1945), based on Betty Smith's best seller about turn-of-the-century tenement life, and he catapulted to the first rank of Hollywood directors with 1949's *Gentleman's Agreement*, a Best Picture Oscar winner that dramatized the pervasive anti-Semitism in American life. Kazan thought the movie overrated, but as a committed liberal, he understood its ideological power. Thirty years later, when Jeff Young, a young Jewish interviewer, was deriding the film for being dated, Kazan responded with a query: "Was your name always Young?" Replied Young: "Mine was. My father changed his." Said Kazan: "That's my point about *Gentleman's Agreement*."

In the years after the war, Kazan forged close bonds with both of the emerging superstar playwrights of the American theater, Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller. The two could hardly be less alike—Miller passionately engaged with the larger world, Williams fascinated with the intimate questions of human existence. "I didn't admire Art more than

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I did Tennessee—or less," Kazan said. But it was clear that he could never experience as deep a kinship with Williams, who, as he put it, "lived in another world, the homosexual enclaves of certain places he considered romantic. . . . [H]is daily life didn't relate to my own." Working on *A Streetcar Named Desire*, his first production with Williams, the director soon realized that the play was the writer's own story: that he wholly identified with the desperately vulnerable Blanche, a lost soul in a brutal world—indeed, that as a homosexual with a preference for "rough trade," he also sought out situations that could end only in disaster. Like Blanche, he was "attracted to the Stanleys of the world," Kazan reflected, testing "the gentleness of his true heart against the violent calls of his erotic nature."

Leftist playwright Arthur Miller, on the other hand, was a genuine soul mate. When Miller gave Kazan an early draft of *Death of a Salesman*, the director reacted just as he'd expected, seeing the play not merely as a wrenching family drama, but as a profound ideological statement; and under Kazan's inspired direction, Willy Loman emerged as the victim of a callous capitalist system.

Following *Salesman*'s 1947 triumph, the young director and young writer went to Hollywood with some script ideas. There they met an unknown starlet, Marilyn Monroe. The unhappily married but faithful Miller fell for her, and she was smitten with him—but it was the happily married but philandering Kazan who slept with her. After making love, Kazan and Monroe would look at Miller's photo on her bedside table and talk lovingly of him.

By the early fifties, expressing anti-capitalist attitudes, as Kazan had done in *Death of a Salesman*, could have consequences. With the Soviets occupying Eastern Europe and the People's Army conquering China, communism had become an incendiary domestic issue—and, for politicians, an easy headline grabber. HUAC had been around since before the war, investigating the Ku Klux Klan and American Nazis as well as communists. Now, under J. Parnell Thomas, it turned its sights on the movies.

The panic took a while to take hold in Hollywood. After the committee issued its first subpoenas, some who didn't get called felt what Norman Mailer called "subpoena envy." Major stars, trumpeting the First Amendment, rallied behind the subpoenaed writers and directors.

Hollywood's hostility toward the committee so spooked Chairman Thomas that he considered canceling the hearings. He didn't, largely because those subpoenaed—the Hollywood Ten, as they'd soon be known—made a disastrous miscalculation. Rather than engage their inquisitors respectfully or plead the Fifth when asked if they were communists, the ten—fervent communist stalwarts almost to a man—followed party orders to assert a First Amendment right to refuse to answer questions about their beliefs. The result: a series of ugly hearing-room shouting matches, with the infuriated Hollywood ideologues, middle-aged and unglamorous, repeatedly gaveled down as they shouted in defiance. Congress cited each of the ten for contempt. The stars who had traveled to Washington to support them—Humphrey Bogart, Gene Kelly, Danny Kaye—quickly recanted. Bogart called the trip "foolish and impetuous," asserting: "I detest Communism, as any decent American does." The studios caved in turn.

In Hollywood's collective memory, the years that followed represent an extended nightmare. As blacklist fear spread, so, for a time, did bravado. Abstractly, it was easy to believe that, if called, one would stand up to the committee. Elia Kazan sure talked that way. He despised the Washington inquisitors and those in the movie industry doing their bidding. At last summoned to testify in January 1952, Kazan took the approved position, offering to discuss his past activity in the party but refusing to name comembers.

This position failed to satisfy the committee—or, Kazan soon learned, his employers in

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Hollywood. Subpoenaed again, deeply anguished, he sought Miller's advice. By both men's account, it was a painful scene. Kazan talked of how he felt pressured to give up everything to defend an ideology he loathed. Miller later claimed that he urged Kazan not to cooperate; Kazan recalled Miller saying that he hoped he'd do the right thing but would support him either way.

After Kazan's swearing in on April 12, the committee's lead counsel noted that the director wished to augment his earlier testimony. "That is correct," said Kazan. "I want to make a full and complete statement. I want to tell you everything I know about it." Kazan proceeded to name eight members of the Group Theater who also had belonged to the Communist Party, and he recounted how party higher-ups had punished him for deviating from the approved line. "I had enough regimentation," he said, "enough of being told what to think and say and do, enough of their habitual violation of the daily practices of democracy. . . . The last straw came when I was invited to go through a typical Communist scene of crawling and apologizing and admitting the error of my ways. I had had a taste of police-state living and I did not like it."

The theater and film communities, which lionized Kazan, reacted with stunned disbelief. But when Kazan ran his *Times* ad justifying his actions, disbelief turned to fury. Almost alone among those threatened, they noted, Kazan had professional options; even if Hollywood blacklisted him, he could still work in theater, which resisted the blacklist. Some thought that he had caved under pressure from fellow Greek Spyros Skouros, president of 20th Century Fox. One of the Group veterans he'd named, actor Tony Kraber, appeared before the committee as an unfriendly witness. Asked if he'd known Kazan during the thirties, Kraber responded scornfully: "Is this the Kazan that signed the contract for five hundred thousand dollars the day after he gave names to this Committee?" The allegation was "an outright lie," Kazan protested.

It didn't matter. People he'd been close with for his entire career now crossed the street to avoid him. At parties, old friends wouldn't meet his eye. Some openly insulted him. To Zero Mostel, he would always be "Looselips." He comes off as a chief villain in Lillian Hellman's notoriously dishonest memoir of the period, *Scoundrel Time*. "Life was easier for Lillian to understand when she had someone to hate," Kazan later wrote. Miller's response was *The Crucible*, a play about a literal witch hunt.

Kazan alternated between resentment at the rough treatment and regret for having provoked it. He had dreams of reconciliation, where everything was as it had been. He even dreamed about Lillian Hellman, afterward wondering: "What did I want—that bitch with balls to forgive me?" Yet he also knew that his conflict with many former colleagues went beyond the fact of his testimony. No longer sympathetic to the far Left, Kazan not only looked at the Soviet Union differently than they did, but also at the United States, which he no longer saw as a bastion of corruption and exploitation but, despite its flaws, as mankind's best hope.

Yes, the committee was a nest of vile bullies; and, yes, some who opposed them had shown great courage. But what was getting overlooked—increasingly so as time passed—was the poisonous nature of the ideology that those on the other side were defending. Whatever the career considerations, Kazan's loathing of communism weighed heavily in his decision to testify. "The 'horrible, immoral thing' that I did I did out of my own true self," he maintained.

Not long after testifying, Kazan started work on Tennessee Williams's latest play, *Camino Real*. During rehearsals, someone brought up how good Kazan looked. "What keeps you looking so young?" he asked. "My enemies," replied Kazan.

One of those enemies, Arthur Miller, wasn't done venting. When the playwright finished his one-act *A View from the Bridge* in 1955, he sent it to Kazan, whom he hadn't spoken with in three years.

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Setting aside his work to read the play, about a Sicilian dockworker in Brooklyn who reveals to the authorities that his romantic rival is an illegal immigrant, Kazan responded enthusiastically: "I have read your play and would be honored to direct it." "You don't understand," Miller shot back. "I didn't send it to you because I wanted you to direct it. I sent it to you because I wanted you to know what I think of stool pigeons."

Miller had another reason to resent Kazan. Years earlier, the two men had worked on a film project, never realized, set on the New York City docks: *The Hook*. Now, in the wake of his "betrayal," Kazan had successfully gone forward with another writer on a similar movie, to tremendous acclaim. That film, of course, was *On the Waterfront*, released in 1954. The other writer was Budd Schulberg, also an ex-communist who had named names before HUAC, for reasons nearly identical to Kazan's—the party, in its drive for intellectual conformity, had ordered him not to publish his novel *What Makes Sammy Run*, deeming it too "bourgeois."

But far worse, in Miller's view (and others agreed), was how Kazan and Schulberg used *On the Waterfront*—the story of a young man, played by Marlon Brando, who achieves nobility by informing on the corrupt thugs who rule the docks—to justify their own treachery. From the start, Kazan's first choice for the role was Brando, whose career he'd made years earlier by casting the then-unknown 23-year-old as Stanley in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. But Brando was so bitter about Kazan's testimony that he refused even to read the *Waterfront* script. "That was a terrible thing Gadge did in Washington," he'd tell people. "I'm not going to work with him anymore." He relented only when he learned that Frank Sinatra wanted the part. Rod Steiger, who played Brando's hoodlum brother, later claimed that he'd done the film without realizing that Kazan had talked to the committee. "It was," Steiger declared, "like I found out my father was sleeping with my sister." For all the political bluster, it was the usual Hollywood story: career first.

On the Waterfront won seven Oscars, including Best Picture, Best Actor for Brando, Best Screenplay for Schulberg, and Best Director for Kazan. Yet in the "progressive" circles where Kazan was once a star, the acclaim only made the hatred fiercer.

In the years that followed, Kazan directed other memorable pictures, among them *East of Eden*, *A Face in the Crowd*, *Splendor in the Grass*, and the deeply personal love letter to his country, *America, America*, based on his uncle's escape from Turkey to the U.S. But by the mid-sixties, demand diminished for his brand of serious, character-driven filmmaking, and Kazan turned to fiction. His 1967 novel *The Arrangement*, dealing with a husband's chronic infidelities, was autobiographical, many believed—and not a few critics noted Kazan's penchant for betrayal. But it was a huge success, Number One on the *Times* best-seller list for 34 weeks.

Yet the sixties ultimately proved a disaster for Kazan. With the country polarized over Vietnam and race, the blacklist took on fresh meaning for a new generation of leftists, who viewed the "Red Scare" as a precursor to the repressive present. And as the veterans of that earlier time were happy to recall, no one had acted more shamefully than Kazan.

The new Hollywood that emerged in the sixties was far more monolithic in its politics than the one Kazan first encountered in the forties, and from the outset the kinship between Hollywood's New and Old Left was inescapable. Even the old Communist Party epithets—"fascist," "reactionary," "warmonger"—came back in vogue. That Kazan had remained a political liberal in the years after his testimony, with a string of trailblazing social dramas to his credit, didn't matter; nor did the fact that he had regularly used blacklisted actors. He was a bad guy.

Meanwhile, the seventies and eighties saw a torrent of books and movies about the blacklist period, pointing up the moral tawdriness of the era and the nobility of its victims. "We had a number of old leftists on the executive board of the Writers

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Guild, some of whom had been blacklisted," recalls TV writer Burt Prelutsky, who served on the board in the eighties. "By then, it was like they'd won the Medal of Honor." The totalitarian ideology that gave rise to the era's excesses wound up either ignored or sanitized.

For his part, Kazan refused to subject others to political litmus tests. Though he opposed the Vietnam War, when his friend and fellow ex-leftist John Steinbeck (who'd written the screenplay for Kazan's *Viva Zapata*) staunchly supported the war, even traveling to Vietnam to write enthusiastic dispatches from the front, Kazan applauded his physical and moral courage. He continued to profess indifference toward the scorn heaped upon him and the uncritical praise accorded those who'd embraced and never publicly rejected Stalinist totalitarianism. But in private, the situation rankled.

Yet it was impossible to overlook Kazan's remarkable career entirely, and as he moved into old age, he started to win some of the honors that great achievers usually take for granted. A lifelong New Yorker, in 1972 he won the city's highest cultural award, the Handel Medallion. Eleven years later, President Reagan presented him with a Kennedy Center Award for lifetime achievement in the arts. Hollywood, though, repeatedly and publicly snubbed him. Time and again, the American Film Institute and the Los Angeles Film Critics Association would consider him for recognition and then pass him over in favor of lesser talents.

Then, finally, the Motion Picture Academy announced, in early 1999, that it would give Kazan his lifetime-achievement award. In the ensuing controversy, the Hollywood Left achieved new levels of self-righteousness, though a few brave commentators challenged its version of events. "If the Academy's occasion calls for apologies," said Arthur Schlesinger, "let Mr. Kazan's denouncers apologize for the aid and comfort they gave to Stalinism." The *Washington Post*'s Richard Cohen asked why the industry had waited so long to bestow this honor on such a legend. "The answer is clear: He was blacklisted." "This whole outcry about betraying friends—of course, no one ever does that in Hollywood," says Prelutsky of the brouhaha. "The fact is, if everything had been exactly the same, except the names named were those of fascists instead of communists, they'd have been erecting statues to the 'informers' on Hollywood and Vine."

The 89-year-old Kazan stayed silent. Reports described him as "in frail health." His old friend Eli Wallach claims that he was starting to suffer from dementia. When he spoke to Kazan just before the director flew west, Wallach recalls, "He was scared, he asked, 'What'll I say?' [and] I told him, 'Just say thank you and get off.' And that's what he did—and he brought on Scorsese and DeNiro out there with him for protection."

Kazan doubtless could have composed in advance the slighting headlines that would follow his death. "History is written," he'd noted, "by the last fellow at the typewriter," and he knew how much writing his enemies had done. He left instructions that he wanted no memorial service, just a party, with everyone he knew invited, including his old enemies, "if they're still alive."

But developments since Kazan's death might have surprised him. At long last, America is looking at the "heroes" and the "villains" of the blacklist period with clearer eyes. Two important new books that just several years ago would probably not have been published are causing even some liberals to reconsider. Ronald and Allis Radosh's *Red Star over Hollywood* gives chapter and verse on the communists' efforts to infiltrate the film industry. And *Time* movie critic Richard Schickel's forthcoming biography of Kazan credits the director for his courage, even as it reveals many of his adversaries as the unapologetic Stalinist tools that they were.

Paul Jarrico might have been right, at the HUAC anniversary gathering in 1997, if not quite in the way that he intended: it could just be that in the final accounting, the good guys *will* win after all.

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Oh, to

England

Truth vs. Theory

Theodore Dalrymple

There are two William Shakespeares. The first is the man born in Stratford, who never seemed to spell his name the same way twice, who was deeply interested in minor financial transactions and the accumulation of property, and who left his wife his second-best bed; the other is the man who left the world the greatest literary legacy ever known. A considerable body of scholarship, the work principally of enthusiastic and learned amateurs, seeks to establish that William Shakespeare in the first sense was not William Shakespeare in the second sense.

I do not wish to enter this controversy, in part because of sheer cowardice. The convinced Baconians, Oxfordians, and Marlovians—those who believe that Francis Bacon, Edward de Vere, and Christopher Marlowe were the true authors of those plays and poems ascribed to Shakespeare—have usually come to their conclusions by means of minute and painstaking, even obsessive, scholarship, using every technique from textual and historical analysis to cryptography and numerology. They do not take kindly to the casual denigration of their efforts by people who assume without further ado that the two Shakespeares were one and the same man.

However, one argument in the controversy interests me, common to all those who oppose the Stratfordians (as the Baconians, Oxfordians, and Marlovians somewhat derisively call those who believe that the two Shakespeares were one): that the plays' author was so understanding of every aspect of human nature, and so intimately knowledgeable about so many fields of human endeavor—as well as about all the strata of the society in which he lived, including the highest—that he could not have been a mere grammar-school boy from Stratford. The author must have had much more formal education than that.

Many books have over the years commented on Shakespeare's knowledge of soldiering, sailing and navigation, the law, and so forth; and I have accumulated a small library of books, both British and American, written over the last century and a half, by doctors commenting on Shakespeare's medical knowledge.

For the most part, these volumes are compilations of every conceivable medical reference in Shakespeare, arranged by play, by disease, or by relevant medical specialty. They include Ernest Jones's famous—or perhaps "notorious" would be a better word—analysis of Hamlet's Oedipus complex, and a much more recent volume on Shakespeare and neurobiology. The general tone is respectful astonishment at the accuracy of many of Shakespeare's medical observations.

No medical author, as far as I know, has suggested as a consequence that Shakespeare must have had a medical training, though many have suggested that he might have picked up medical knowledge from his son-in-law, a university-trained physician. His name was Dr. John Hall: he held a degree from Cambridge and probably had studied on the continent as well. However, Hall settled in Stratford only in 1600 and married Shakespeare's daughter, Susanna, in 1608. By then, of course, Shakespeare had written most of his plays and made most of his medical observations and allusions: Hall, therefore, could not have been the chief source of his medical knowledge.

Even so, it is instructive to compare Shakespeare's and Hall's medical observations. For Shakespeare, I could choose from many cases, but one will suffice. Here is Falstaff's death, as described by Mistress Quickly in *Henry V*:

> 'A made a finer end and went away an it had been any christom child; 'a parted even just between twelve and one, even at the turning o' the tide: for after I saw him fumble with the sheets and play with flow-

He didn't need a B.A.

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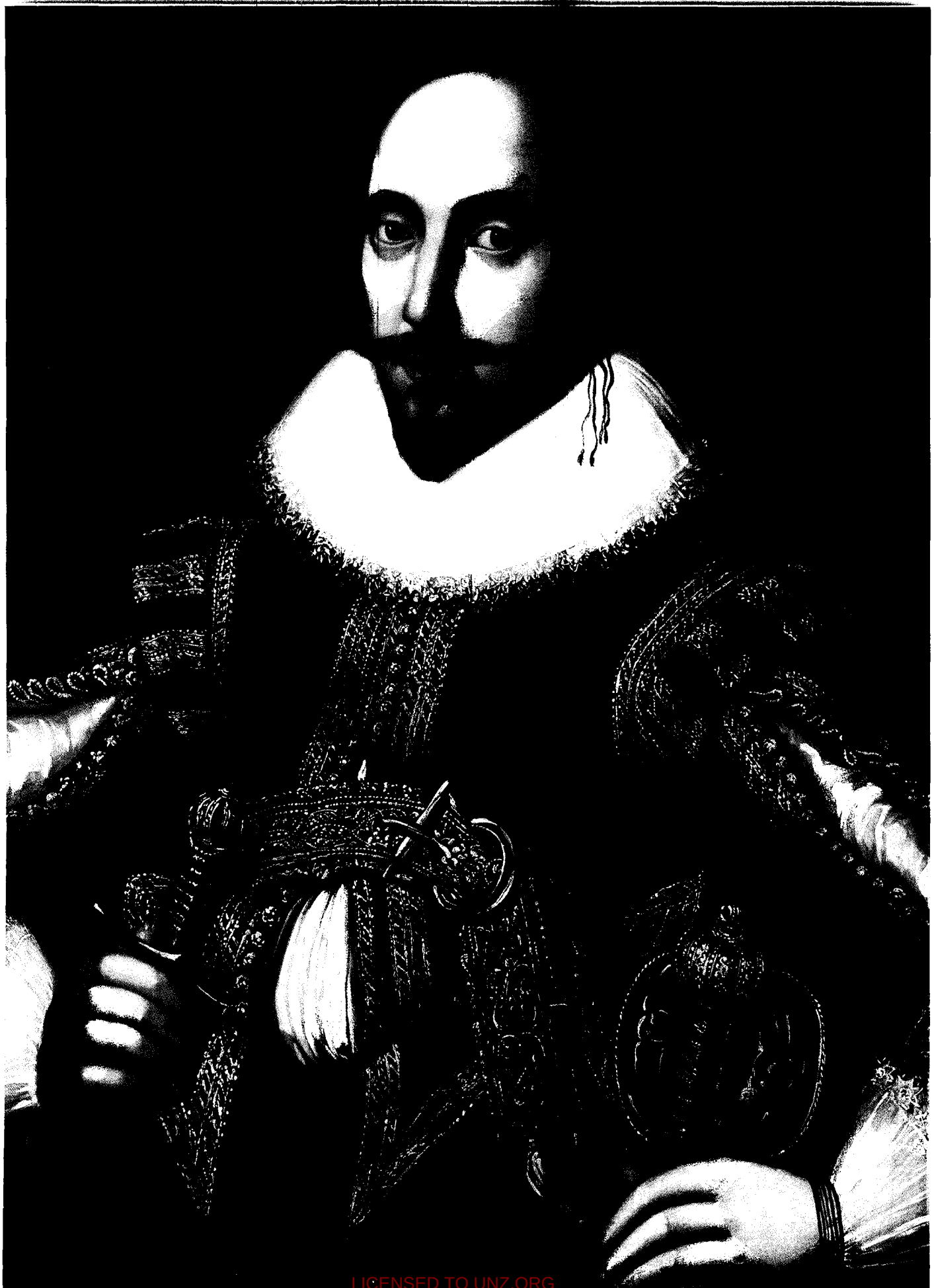

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ers and smile upon his fingers' ends, I knew there was but one way; for his nose was as sharp as a pen, and 'a babbled of green fields. "How now, Sir John!" quoth I; "What, man! Be o' good cheer." So 'a cried out "God, God, God!" three or four times. Now I, to comfort him, bid him 'a should not think of God; I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet. So 'a bade me lay more clothes on his feet: I put my hand into the bed and felt them, and they were as cold as any stone; then I felt to his knees, and they were as cold as any stone, and so upward and upward, and all was as cold as any stone.

One of the merits of this passage—and it is characteristic of Shakespeare that the merits of his writing should be so multiform, combining in equal measure truth, humanity, tolerance, wisdom, understanding, love, irony, and poetry—is its beautiful and accurate description of delirium. Here are some of the diagnostic criteria for delirium in the World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases:

> (i) impairment of consciousness [with] reduced ability to direct, focus, sustain, and shift attention;
>
> (ii) global disturbance of cognition [with] perceptual distortions, illusions and hallucinations, most often visual; impairment of abstract thinking and comprehension . . . typically with some degree of incoherence;
>
> (iii) psychomotor disturbances [with] hypo- or hyperactivity and unpredictable shifts from one to the other;
>
> (iv) emotional disturbances, e.g., depression, anxiety or fear, irritability, euphoria, apathy or . . . perplexity.

Mistress Quickly, then, was a fine observer. Furthermore, the "nose as sharp as a pen" is a most precise and correct observation of a man in his death throes.

Now let us turn to Dr. Hall, whose medical observations, compiled from his notes after his death, appeared as a book, *Select Observations on English Bodies of Eminent Persons in Desperate Diseases*, that went through three editions in the seventeenth century. It is to go from the sublime to what, from our current standpoint, appears to be the ridiculous. I take a case at random: all 82 in the book are of the same intellectual ilk.

> Mr John Trap (Minister, for his piety and learning second to none) about the 33 year of his age, of a melancholy temper, and by much Study fell into Hypochondriac Melancholy, and pain of the Spleen, with some Scorbutic Symptoms, viz. Difficulty of breathing after gentle motion of the Body, beating of the Heart, with fainting at the rising of the Vapours, and became a little better when they were dispersed. He had a gentle Erratic fever, so that he was much amaciated; after he had done preaching on the Sabbath, he could scarce speak; his Urine changed often, his pulse was mutable and unequal, and he languished much. Some ordinary medicines were used, but not succeeding, he desired my help and counsel, which was readily performed by me in prescribing the following, by which he was restored from the very jaws of Death, both safely, quickly and pleasantly.

Among the prescriptions, not all of them pleasant, were: tartar vitriolatus (potassium sulphate) and mercurius dulcis (mercurous chloride), both given in boiled apple pap; cream of tartar; chalybeate wine; pectoral rolls (containing maiden hair and hyssop); sceletyrs syrup; raisins dried in the sun, boiled in sack to the consistency of a paste, passed through a strainer and mixed with conserve of rosemary flowers and bugloss; citron pills; cinnamon; saffron; antiscorbutic beer; solution of water snails; solution of frogs' spawn; and emetic infusion.

Apparently Trap recovered, partly, no doubt, from fear of further treatment by Hall. The doctor had many worse things up his therapeutic sleeve, such

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as goose, peacock, pigeon, and hen dung; ox bile; spiders' webs; and oil of scorpions.

The seemingly eclectic farrago of prescriptions found its basis, if somewhat distantly, in the Galenical theory of humors. There were four such humors, each partaking of one of the qualities of the four elements of Greek philosophy. Blood was airy, which is to say warm and moist; phlegm was watery, that is, cold and moist; yellow bile was fiery (hot and dry); and black bile was earthy (cold and dry). Every person had his distinct temperament, according to the predominance of the humors within him, whether sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, or melancholic; illness was the upset of the balance between the humors. The purpose of medical treatment was to restore that balance, and medicines either promoted the deficient humor or tempered the excessive one. Oil of earthworms, for example, exerted a cooling and moisturizing effect, useful in treating those illnesses that excessive yellow bile had supposedly caused.

The Galenical theory was an article of uncritical faith for university-trained physicians. Training consisted of indoctrination, memorization, and regurgitation. No deviation was permissible, and even refinement or elaboration was hazardous. Outright challenge was professionally dangerous. The theory therefore took many centuries to overthrow; mastery of it, and the treatments it entailed, distinguished real physicians from mere empiricks and quacks. Hall saw his patients through Galenical eyes; he was the master of an all-sufficient theory that made close observation of them redundant, indeed *infra dignitatum*. That is why it is almost impossible now to diagnose anything from his descriptions of his patients. He didn't need to observe: he had his theory, and so he knew everything in advance.

His book, incidentally, records only his successes. They confirmed that his theory was right all along, otherwise—does it not follow?—they would not have been successes.

Shakespeare was, of course, conversant with Galen's theory of humors. This no more means that he must have had a university training in medicine than that a modern man who has heard of the germ theory of disease must be a microbiologist. But Shakespeare was not in thrall to Galenism as was his son-in-law: in other words, it was precisely his lack of university training that permitted him to be so acute an observer. While he needed a sophisticated basic education to be Shakespeare, the author of the plays, a university training, at least with regard to medicine, would have diminished rather than enhanced his work. A contemporary medical man can learn something from Shakespeare; he can learn nothing from Hall.

As Orwell pointed out, it takes effort and determination to see what is in front of one's face. Among the efforts required is the discarding of the lenses of excessive or bogus theorizing. When it comes to our attempts to understand the phenomena of our own society, I cannot help but wonder how many of us are in the grip of theories that are the equivalent of Hall's Galenical theory, and whether as a result we do not prescribe the legislative equivalents of human skull, mummy dust, and jaw of pike.

As to why people adopt theories that conflict with the most minimal honest reflection, I will quote T. S. Eliot, who, while not always right, was right about this:

> Half the harm that is done in the world is due to people who want to feel important. They don't want to do harm—but the harm does not interest them . . . or they do not see it . . . because they are absorbed in the endless struggle to think well of themselves.

Eliot might have added: the endless struggle to look well in the eyes of their fellow intellectuals and the fear of losing caste. But as a result of their efforts, as Orwell also famously said, "We have sunk to a depth in which re-statement of the obvious is the first duty of intelligent men."

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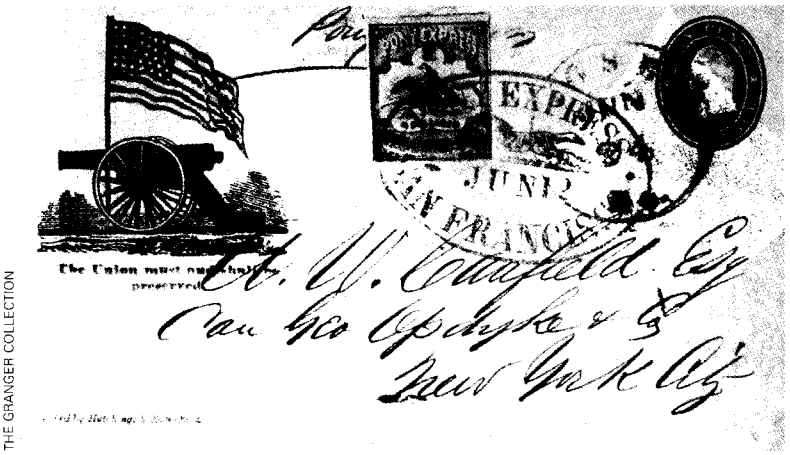
Letters

Legitimate Questions



THE GRANGER COLLECTION

To the editor:

Kay Hymowitz writes that one cause of black illegitimacy is that children learn that single-parent households are normal and appropriate ["The Black Family: 40 Years of Lies," Summer 2005]. But what led the original two-parent black family to disintegrate and begin perpetuating the vicious cycle? Racism and slavery were, no doubt, pernicious influences. But the matrilineal patterns seen in African-Americans are very similar to those seen among sub-Saharan blacks today. Surely slavery and racism cannot explain those behaviors in Africa.

Maybe the evolutionary history of Africans led them to adopt different patterns of reproductive behavior than other ethnic groups. Perhaps ancient Africa favored early and frequent reproduction with relatively little parental attention devoted to individual offspring. It is well known that the average age of menarche in black girls is earlier than in Asian or white girls. Perhaps this, combined with the caddishness of males, permits high fertility and consequently high reproductive success.

Bradley M. Cooke, Ph.D.
Dept. of Neurobiology and Physiology
Northwestern University

To the editor:

In so confidently attributing many of the ills of urban America to unwed motherhood, Kay Hymowitz has made a basic error of statistical analysis: assuming causation because of correlation. In fact, there is little evidence that the rise of single-parent families has caused crime, drug addiction, and the other severe social crises in our cities. It is just as reasonable to conclude that these problems result from the same socioeconomic conditions—such as unemployment, poverty and racism—that led to the breakdown of the traditional family.

Clearly, fathers' taking responsibility for the children they create is an important and necessary piece of the puzzle. But sweeping generalizations with ideological undertones do nothing to solve complex social problems.

Daniel Brezenoff
Long Beach, CA

Kay Hymowitz responds:

Dr. Cooke may be right that the modern nuclear family is ill suited to sub-Saharan Africa, but he also implies that marriage norms are a part of our genetic inheritance passed down through generations. I doubt it. All races have been able to adapt to norms that have changed over the centuries with economic, demographic, and cultural conditions. The weakening of those norms—the result of slavery, the sexual revolution, and the left-wing obfuscation that followed publication of the Moynihan Report—better explains a 70 percent black out-of-wedlock birthrate.

Mr. Brezenoff might want to familiarize himself with the summary of the latest research on marriage and child well-being in *The Future of Children*, a joint publication of the Woodrow Wilson School and the Brookings Institution, neither of them known for the ideology that he hints is the source of my "sweeping generalizations." The journal shows that even when controlling for race, education, and income, children who grow up in single-parent homes are at higher risk of school failure, teen pregnancy, delinquency, and a host of other ills, than those from intact homes.

Mr. Brezenoff says that we should blame the deterioration

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Letters

of the ghetto after 1965 not on the breakdown of the family, but on joblessness, poverty, and racism. But why did ghetto conditions worsen even during the years that employment rose? As for racism, does he mean to suggest that Americans became more bigoted *after* 1965?

Has the City Stalled?

To the editor:

Steven Malanga's article ["Gotham Stalls Out," Summer 2005] is completely off the mark. In the past year, all five boroughs experienced significant job growth and greatly reduced unemployment rates, and our economy is now outpacing the nation's. The longing for a time when New York's outer-borough economies "contributed nearly half of job growth" is particularly puzzling, since the outer boroughs contributed more than 60 percent of the city's job growth last year.

It is equally unclear what the basis is for the implication that the city's commercial real-estate market is suffering. Last year, Class A commercial vacancy rates fell and property values rose in all five boroughs; construction spending throughout the city matched the record set in 2003; and the number of building permits issued in the city was the highest it had been in at least a dozen years.

Andrew M. Alper
President
New York City Economic Development Corporation

Steven Malanga responds:

Andrew Alper's claim (made over the summer) that all five boroughs have "experienced significant job growth" is patently absurd, considering that in total the city's job rolls grew by less than 0.3 percent in 2004, the most reliable data available when I wrote my piece, while national employment grew by 1.14 percent, or triple the city's rate in that same period. More recent job figures hardly bolster Alper's argument. Through the first half of 2005, preliminary figures suggest that the city's annualized job-growth rate has increased to about 1 percent, while the U.S. job-growth rate has accelerated to 1.7 percent in the same period.

Mr. Alper adds that the outer boroughs are contributing 60 percent of job growth, but 60 percent of practically nothing is less than practically nothing. In my story, I wrote about a time in the late 1990s when the outer boroughs were contributing half of city job growth and when the city's economy was expanding by some 300,000 jobs. To compare that period to feeble job growth of one percent or less is meaningless.

As to Mr. Alper's claim that construction is booming because of rising permits, this clearly is not reflected in employment in the industry. Employment in construction has fallen in every year since 2001 in New York City and through 2004 was down by 11,000 jobs, or 9 percent, from the peak. Preliminary numbers for the first six months of 2005 show that construction employment is running at merely the 2004 levels, which hardly suggests a robust recovery.

During the mayoral election, the Bloomberg campaign ran television ads that claimed that the mayor's programs added 62,000 jobs to all the boroughs. But the city has seen nothing like that kind of growth. Last year, in fact, was the first since the mayor took office that the city experienced any job gains at all—small as they were.

Ibsen's *Wild Duck*

To the editor:

While Dr. Dalrymple's discussion of *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts*, and *Hedda Gabler* demonstrates scholarship ["Ibsen and His Discontents," Summer 2005], his selecting these plays as representative of Ibsen is disappointing. True, they are popular, and useful to make his points in counterposing utopianism and perfectibility with a more realistic view.

But contrast 20-year-old Ibsen seeking a transcendental "new truth" with a mature Ibsen stating, "You must never tell everything to people." Or compare *Ghosts* with *The Wild Duck*, which satirizes Gregers, a would-be reformer who brings out the truth with devastating effects for a family with a secret as old as their 14-year-old daughter. Struggling against Gregers is Dr. Relling, who reminds him, "The child is part of the marriage." With her paternity exposed and her father from birth saying, "Don't come near me," the daughter commits suicide.

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Letters

Relling denounces Gregers as one of "those damned shysters who come badgering us poor people with their 'summons to the ideal.' " The doctor's prescription: support this father's illusions and his family's myths. Does not this comport with Dalrymple's point about imperfectibility?

Lawrence Grolnick, M.D.
White Plains, NY

Theodore Dalrymple responds:

I am grateful to Dr. Grolnick for his comments. *The Wild Duck*—a most beautiful play—does indeed seem to have the opposite moral of the three plays I have commented upon. However, Ibsen wrote it because he was worried that he had won the argument, or had had an effect too easily: he feared not untruth, but being the leader of a group and therefore not being alone. He did not publicly contradict the Shavian interpretation of his importance as a critical moralist.

Seeger's Legacy

To the editor:

In his article about Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, and others ["America's Most Successful Communist," Summer 2005], Howard Husock cites a little-known verse of Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land" about "no trespassing." One of the reasons this verse is little known is that it was edited out of the recording's most-distributed version.

In the late 1990s, the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences issued a boxed set called "The Ultimate Grammy Box" with about 100 Grammy-winning songs, as well as a few recordings made before the Grammys began in 1958.

Guthrie's 1947 performance of "This Land Is Your Land" is in the set. When I first heard it, I noticed that it faded out at the end, a common technique in popular songs now, but certainly not in 1947. After some searching, I found the identical recording, but one that was 40 seconds longer and had the "no trespassing" verse in it.

So NARAS, which spent most of the nineties shrieking about censorship of its "artists," quietly censored one of its own.

Jay Gilbert
WEBN
Cincinnati, OH

To the editor:

Pete Seeger and the Almanac Singers did not oppose war altogether. They opposed it firmly and vehemently until June 22, 1941, at which point it suddenly transpired that Oceania had always been at war with Eastasia—I mean, that what had literally been until the day before an imperialist war, not worth the life of one American, suddenly became a glorious crusade for freedom and democracy.

In May, Seeger and the other lovers of peace had put out an album and book called *Songs for John Doe*, spelling out why the war was merely a clash of two bourgeois, decadent states. I am told that a copy of either is now quite rare, since come June 22 they did everything they could to grab them back. I don't think this little incident appears in Seeger's reminiscences of the high days. No doubt just an oversight; he's had a busy life.

Sometime in late 1945 Seeger became a pacifist again, or at least a pacifist of a sort: vociferously against war and war preparations—when conducted by the West.

Alex Bensky
Detroit, MI

To the editor:

Howard Husock's otherwise excellent article has one small error. He referred to an organization called the "International Workers of the World." Husock meant the "Industrial Workers of the World," often called the "Wobblies."

Chaim Sisman
Los Angeles, CA

Howard Husock responds:

There were several small errors in the piece that I am grateful to readers for pointing out. The IWW was, indeed, the Industrial Workers of the World. The song "I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night" was not based on "Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream," though their tunes are similar; the latter was a protest song written by another left-wing folksinger, Ed McCurdy. And Pete Seeger did indeed change his views on World War II once the Soviet line changed—and it's worth noting that he served in the army, in the Pacific theater.

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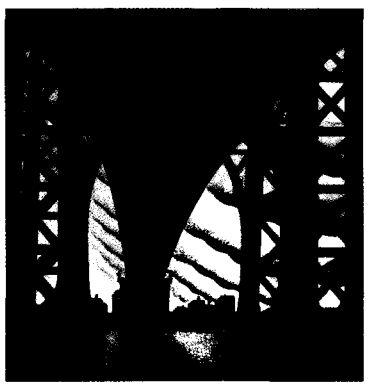
Harry Stein is a contributing editor of *City Journal*. A journalist and novelist, he is the author of *How I Accidentally Joined the Vast Right-Wing Conspiracy (and Found Inner Peace)* and *The Girl Watchers Club*.



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Law Isn't Enough

Theodore Dalrymple

Recently in London a correspondent of a left-liberal Dutch newspaper interviewed me, a decent, civilized sort—one of us, in short. I am sure that he brought up his children to say please and thank you, probably in several languages.

He asked me why I had chosen recently to move from England to France. I said that I thought France was a decade or two behind Britain in cultural decline. It had maintained certain standards a little better than Britain—though, I added, I could see that it was heading in the same direction.

He asked me what evidence I had for my claim. Well, I replied, crime in France was approaching British levels; in some places, it was even worse, at least for serious crimes of violence.

Another straw in the wind was the rising number of tattooed and pierced young people on view, as well as tattoo and piercing parlors. Ten years ago, you hardly ever saw a tattooed person in France: now they are everywhere. The small and ancient town, solidly bourgeois, near where I live has such a parlor, purveying savage kitsch to young fools. *Le Monde* published a little while back a profile of the acclaimed French writer Ann Scott, whose work makes Baudelaire's seem a bit like that of Ella Wheeler Wilcox. Scott has a large and prominent tattoo of a swallow on her neck. Critics claim that her latest book, describing heroin addiction and lesbian love, has a terrible beauty, as well as near-emetic properties.

The correspondent asked me: what was wrong with tattooing, if that was how people wanted to adorn themselves? I asked him whether he would have himself tattooed—whether he would be happy if his teenaged children had themselves tattooed—and if not, why not? After all, if he would not like it, he must have some inner objection to tattooing.

True, he said, but tattooing was not illegal. And since even I, who deprecated it, did not think that it should be illegal, there was nothing further to say about it. If tattooing was legal, it was thus of no social, moral, or cultural significance.

I tried to point out some of the cultural meanings of the vogue for tattooing. First, it was aesthetically worse than worthless. Tattoos were always kitsch, implying not only the absence of taste but the presence of dishonest emotion.

Second, the vogue represented a desperate (and rather sad) attempt on a mass scale to achieve individuality and character by means of mere adornment, which implied both intellectual vacuity and unhealthy self-absorption.

And third, it represented mass downward cultural and social aspiration, since everyone understood that tattooing had a traditional association with low social class and, above all, with aggression and criminality. It was, in effect, a visible symbol of the greatest, though totally ersatz, virtue of our time: an inclusive unwillingness to make judgments of morality or value.

But the correspondent's premise that the legality of an act was the sole criterion by which one could or should judge it chilled me. It is a sinister premise. It makes the legislature the complete arbiter of manners and morals, and thus accords to the state quasi-totalitarian powers without the state's ever having claimed them. The state alone decides what we have or lack permission to do: we have to make no moral decisions for ourselves, for what we have legal permission to do is also, by definition, morally acceptable.

Even worse than the correspondent's implicitly totalitarian assumption was his lack of awareness of how societies cohere, and how social existence becomes tolerable, let alone pleasant. After all, the law does not prohibit rudeness, boorishness, and an infinity of unpleasant habits. But it is clear that if, for example, the prevalence of boorishness increases, life in society becomes more filled with friction and danger.

What I found so odd about the correspondent were his perfect manners and refined tastes. But so little confidence did he have in the value of the things that he valued that he seemed indifferent to the mechanism of their disappearance or destruction. This is the way a civilization ends: not with a bang but a whimper.

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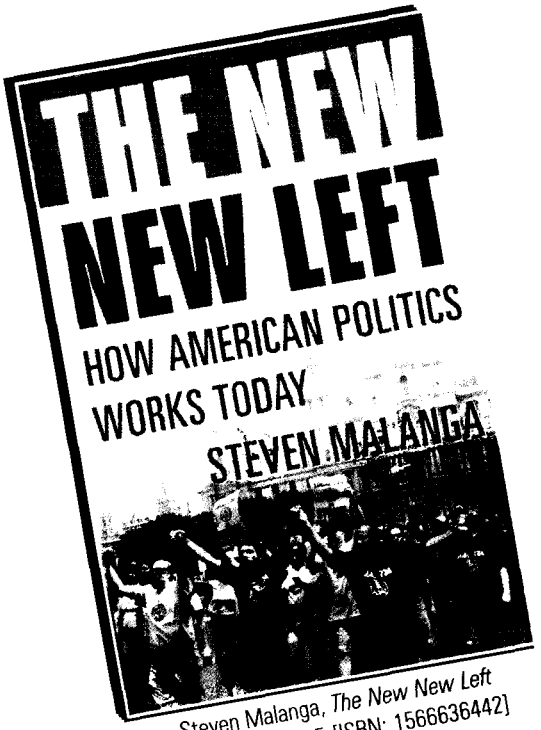

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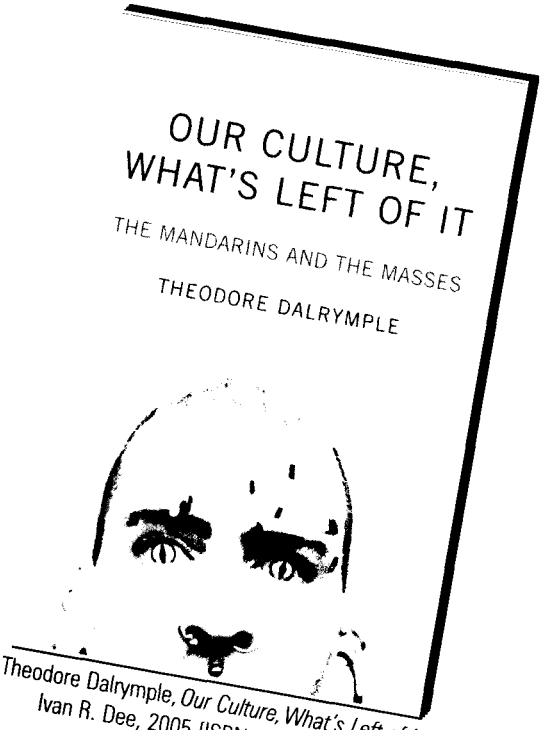

Theodore Dalrymple, *Our Culture, What's Left of It*
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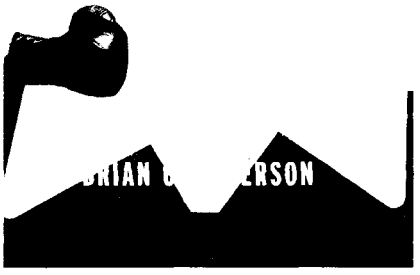

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